

# Redemption of TIME,

The Duty and Wisdom of

CHRISTIAN S

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Evil DAY S

OR, A

## Practical Discourse,

Shewing what Special Opportunities  
ought to be Redeem'd.

What Mispendings of Time are to be  
avoided.

With convincing Reasons, quickning  
Motives, and proper Directions, for the  
right Improvement of precious Time

Recommended as profitable for Fa-  
milies, and proper to be given at Funerals.

By JOHN WADE,  
Minister of HAMMER SMITH.

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Reception of the

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CHRISTIAN

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Full D. A. Y.

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Practical Discourse

showing what special opportunities

ought to be taken

What means of

providing

With converting persons, quickening

Motives and proper instructions for the

right improvement of students

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LONDON: Printed for the Author

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## Epistle Dedicatory.

*Removal hence gainful and advantageous, comfortable and desirable to us.*

God hath prescribed a course of convenient means to be observed and used by us in this Probation state. He does not lead us to a Life of Blessedness (as St. Hilary tells us truly) through thorny difficult Controversies, and knotty hard Questions. He would have us, not dispute, but live: for (as the Prophet informs us, Mic 6. 8.) He hath shewed thee, O Man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee; but to do justly, and to love Mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? And (as the Apostle expresses it, Tit. 2. 11. 12. The Grace of God that bringeth Salvation, hath appeared to all men; teaching us, that denying Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, we should live soberly righteously, and godly in this present World. He requires us to believe in order to Practice and Obedience.

God has given us but few things to be believed; (as Bp. Forbes was wont will to observe) but he has plainly ordered and appointed a great many necessary things to be done by us. We must do his Commandments, that we may be blessed, and have right to the

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Tree of Life, and enter in by the Gates into the City, Rev. 22. 14. We must by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for Glory, and Honour, and Immortality, Rom. 2. 7.

*The Scope and Drift of the following Treatise is, to shew you particularly and fully, how to redeem the Time of this Life, so as to gain a glorious Immortality.*

*As for the matter of it, it is useful to instruct you in the Divine Arithmetick, to make you wiser than brutish Sinners, that know not how to number their Days: It is apt to engage you upon an early present Industry; a diligent, speedy Care of your Time, and of your Souls; and is a Manuduction to the Exercise of a great part of Practical Religion.*

*The Style of it is plain, familiar and easie to be understood by all, which renders the Treatise the more generally useful. Some affect a Language so gaudy as is not consistent with the Gravity of Theology. Others discourse in so strong a Style, that by their lofty Words and Expressions they shoot quite over the Heads, and so miss the Hearts of too many of their Auditors. Some paint the Glass till they darken the Window, and keep out the*

*Light.*

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TO THE  
GENTLEMEN  
AND  
INHABITANTS  
OF  
HAMMERSMITH.

Honoured, Worthy, and Well-beloved Friends,

**T**HE great and good God made Man  
Lord of the whole Earth, Gen. 1.  
28. but this is not the highest Pre-  
ferment, and utmost Advancement that he  
capable of, and destin'd to. The incorporeal  
and diviner part of him sufficiently discovers,  
and evidently demonstrates that he pertains  
and belongs to another World. Tully  
brings in Cato delivering this high point of  
Philosophy, that this Earth and earthly Bo-  
dy, into which the Soul is sunk at present,

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*is a place extreamly contrary to a divine Nature, and to Eternity. This Earth is but our Inn, says he, in which as Travellers we are to lodge in our Journey, hastening through Time to Eternity; not our House and Home in which we are to dwell continually. This World is appointed only as a passage to a better place and state: We are now in a way of preparation for it. This World (as one says well) is the great Laboratory for perfecting of Souls for the next. We are here indeed to make but a short stay; yet we must not repine at the brevity of this Life, but ought to be content with that space of time which is allowed us for our Life on Earth; and to take care, that in whatsoever Act we are appointed to appear, we perform our particular parts well, though they prove but short ones that are assigned and committed to us, in the great Comedy acted in the Theatre of this inferiour World: for (as the fore-mentioned Philosopher acknowledgeth) a short time of Life is long enough to serve us to live well and honestly. It concerns us only to endeavour, to use and improve what time God pleases to afford us, in doing those things which will fit and dispose us for a happy Eternity, and make our Translation and*

*Removal*

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*Light. Seneca professes, that he does not approve of any jejune and dry Discourses about the great and weighty matters of Morality; for Philosophy, says he, does not renounce all Wit and Ingeny: but he does not allow much labour to be laid out upon Words. A sick man, says he, does not seek a Physician that is eloquent, but that is able to cure his Disease: no more than the Passenger regards and enquires, whether the skilful Pilot, or Governour of a Ship, be a very comely and handſom man? Thou haſt as much buſineſs upon thee, ſays he, to heal the Diſtempers of Mens minds and manners, as a Phyſician has in a Plague-time; and art thou imployed about Words? be glad if thou canſt be ſufficient for things. I have not ſtudied for great VVords, nor labour'd for high Language; but only ſought out ſound, whoſome, healing words, 2 Tim. 1. 13.*

*It may be, ſome candid, courteous Reader, if he ſee Occaſion, may make the ſame or like Apology for me, as Seneca once did for Fabianus Papyrius, when Lucilius had taken no ſmall Prejudice againſt certain Books of that Philoſopher, becauſe his Style was not elaborate and polite, but ſeem'd to him to be low and mean: He formed Manners, not VVords,*

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*says Seneca* ; and wrote to the Minds, not Ears of Men. It does not become a Philosopher to be studious and solicitous about Language. He was not negligent in his Style, *says he*, but only not over-careful about it ; and therefore you will find nothing sordid or slovenly in it. His words are chosen, not affected. His Discourses are not flat and low, but pleasing and plain. Look on the whole Body of the Book ; though it be not trim, 'tis honest. Would you have him set himself to so small a thing as VVords? — And you may perceive by what he has perform'd, that he felt what he wrote. VVhat ever he delivers tends all to Profit, and a good Mind : Applause is not sought for, or look'd after by him.

*I shall only speak for my self in the Words of Salvian* ; VVe that are greater Lovers of Things than of VVords, follow what is profitable more than what is plausible ; nor do we seek that the empty Ornaments of the Age, but that the wholesome Emoluments of things may be commended in us. VVe would have our VVritings contain, not Enticements, but Remedies, which may not so much please the Ears of  
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the idle, as profit the Minds of such as are sick.

*The Design and Aim of this Discourse in its composure was, not to tickle the Ear, and strike the Fancy, but to warm the Heart, and reach the Conscience, and direct the Life; to teach Men how to live, and how to die, and how to attain a blisful Life after Death.*

*I here present you with a plain Discourse in a very learned Age. I have prepared and provided for you, not fine Manchet, but rather Barly Bread, such as Bucer encouraged holy Bradford, for want of better, to give unto the People. As St. Peter said to the lame Man. Acts 3. 6. Silver and Gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk: I say to you in like manner, I have no rich Present to offer you; but such as I have give I unto you: I would, under God, be a means to help you to find your Feet, and walk in the way of God's Commandments, and run the Race that is set before you.*

*I was induced to make these Papers publick not only to satisfie the desires of some Friends, but because I found so very little perform'd by  
other*



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others on this subject, which I thought deserved a larger and fuller handling: And that by my own appearing in it, I might oblige myself above all others to a greater and stricter care of my own Time, and might leave some wholesome Counsels, and seasonable helps to a holy Life, to my own Children, Friends and Acquaintance; and do some lasting Service to your Souls; and when I shall be dead, may by these Papers continue to speak to you and yours: For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all, in the Bowels of Jesus Christ. I have you in my Heart; and my Heart's Desire and Prayer to God for you is, that you might be saved, Phil. i. 7, 8. Rom. 10. 1.

I shall only here crave your leave to put you in mind of a few very necessary things.

1. Let me earnestly exhort and beseech you, that you would worthily and becomingly act the parts of Men and Christians. Live as those that have rational Souls, noble and immortal Spirits within you; and do nothing repugnant to the Light of your own Minds and Consciences. Yea, live as those that have the benefit and advantage of Divine Revelation.

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tion. *Let none that name the Name of Christ allow themselves in the constant, confident Practice of any notorious, scandalous Sin or Vice, directly and expressly contrary to the holy Word, and righteous Law of God; proceeding upon a false, imaginary Supposition; venturing upon a fond, ungrounded, foolish Presumption; that the Mercy of God will at last prevail against his Wisdom, Holiness, Justice and Truth: perswading, promising, flattering themselves in any evil way, that God (according to their Idea and Model of a Deity) will never find in his heart to punish the unreclaimable Sinner, and obstinate final Impenitent, with everlasting Misery, and eternal Torment; though he has over and over threatned it in the Gospel, and tho' it stands with good and great Reason that he should do it. Walk closely according to the Rule, and maintain a Conversation becoming the Gospel of Christ, Phil. 1. 27.*

2. *If any of you, upon search and enquiry into your selves, shall find in your selves any decay of Piety, declining in Godliness, abatement of Strictness, neglect of Watchfulness, any slackness and remissness in Duty, any va-*

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*nity of Mind, and carelessness of Spirit growing upon you; if you can perceive you have lost your first Love; Remember from whence you are fallen, and repent, and do the first works, Rev. 2. 4, 5. recover, maintain, increase the old warmth: Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, c. 3. v. 2. Fortify natural Principles, suscite your natural Powers, stir up the Gifts and Graces of God in your selves.*

Man is no Star, but a Quick Coal  
Of Mortal Fire:  
Who blows it not, nor doth control  
A faint Desire,  
Let his own Ashes choke his Soul.

*Look up to Heaven continually for the help and benefit of Divine Influences, Illuminations, Impressions; and receive not the Grace of God in vain; but up, and be doing; go in the strength of the Lord, and work out your Salvation with fear and trembling.*

3. *Take heed of the Prophanation, and beware of a partial, formal observation of the Lord's-Day: Where it is partial, it is likely*

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to be formal. Read attentively and frequently the earnest Exhortation to a thorough Redemption of the Lord's-Day, Chap. 2. There you are inform'd, that a due Redemption of the whole Lord's-Day, is the way to redeem all other Days to the greatest Advantage, as to Spirituals, and as to Temporals too. And in reference to this latter, I shall here confirm what is said there, by proposing the Experience, and producing the notable, considerable Testimony of a wise and learned, a great and very good Man, the worthily renowned late Chief Justice Hale, who was (as Seneca says of good men) natus ad exemplar, born to be an Example to others: In a short discourse of his about Redemption of Time, I find these Words: Be sure, says he, to spend the Lord's-Day intirely in those Religious Duties proper to it; and let nothing but an inevitable Necessity divert you from it. — It is that which will sanctifie and prosper all the rest of your Time, and your secular Employments. I am not apt to be superstitious, says he, but this I have certainly and infallibly found true, that by my deportment in my Duty towards God, in the Times devoted to his service, especially on the Lord's day, I could make a certain con-

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jecture of my success in my secular Occasions the rest of the Week after : If I were loose and negligent in the former, the latter never succeeded well ; if strict, and conscientious, and watchful in the former, I was successful and prosperous in the latter. *And again, in a Godly Letter to his Children* (of whom he travail'd in birth that Christ might be formed in them, Gal. 4. 19) *he freely opens his mind in these remarkable words to them, I now write something to you, says he, of your observation of the Lords-day, because I find in the World much Looseness and Apostacy from this Duty. People begin to be cold and careless in it, allowing themselves sports and recreations, and secular Employments in it, without any necessity ; which is a sad spectacle, and an ill presage. And he there makes this Profession and Declaration to them ; I have found by a strict and diligent Observation, that a due Observation of the Duties of this Day, has ever had joined to it, a Blessing upon the rest of my time, and the VWeek that has been so begun, has been blessed and prosperous to me : And on the other side, when I have been negligent of the Duties of this day, the rest of the VWeek has been unsuccessful*  
and

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and unhappy to my own secular Employments, so that I could easily make an estimate of my successes in my own secular employments the VWeek following, by the manner of my passing of this Day: And this I do not write lightly or inconsiderately, but upon a long and sound Observation and Experience. *You see how this was much upon his Heart, and how ready he was to remark this upon all Occasions.*

4. *Let me charge and press it upon your Consciences, that on a Lords Day, you would be so kind and charitable, so true and faithful to your Souls, as not to lose the season of a Sacrament, if you can by any means redeem it. Let none among you live in a sinful, shameful Disuse, and an unwarrantable, excusable Neglect of the holy Sacrament of the Lords Supper. Let me solemnly invite you in the moving patheticall Words of the devout Herbert,*

Come ye hither all, whose taste  
Is your waste;  
Save your cost, and mend your fare.  
God is here prepar'd and drest,  
And the Feast;  
God to whom all dainties are.

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*I do not call you to a Prophanation, but to a worthy Participation of this sacred Ordinance. They that do customarily live unholily, must needs receive unworthily. Are they fit to partake of the Lords Supper, who allow themselves in the Love and Practice of any known Sin? Are they dispos'd to eat Christs Flesh, who will not abstain from fleshly Lusts, but usually walk after the Flesh? Are they prepar'd to drink Christs Blood, who commonly drink in Iniquity like Water, and frequently drown themselves and others in Drink? Are they that walk unworthy of their Baptism, in a condition to venture upon the holy Communion?*

*I invite you to all that is duly previous and preparatory to the Duty, and to a right and requisite manner of the performance of it.*

*Come, but take God along with you, whenever you intend to come. By the help of God, you may receive this Sacrament as you ought. Excuse not your Abstinence and Forbearance by pretending your Unfitness: but set your selves in good earnest, with an honest, willing, resolved Mind, under God, to fit your  
selves*

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selves; and you shall quickly find, that God will readily assist and enable you, promote and further you in the way of your Duty.

Come, but competently understand the nature and ends of this Ordinance; and impartially try, and examine your selves before you come. Come with a hearty willingness to part with your Sins for him, who lost his Blood, and laid down his Life for you; and with a firm Resolution to live to him, that died for you. Labour by habitual Devotedness to God, and by continual circumspect walking and holy living to be in a general disposition for worthy Receiving. A well-ordered Conversation is the best Preparation for the Communion, and will most certainly make all other Preparations more easie.

Come, for I tell you plainly, it is not at your own liberty and choice, to come, or keep away. There is a special Mandate for your coming, This do in remembrance of me, says Christ, Luke 22. 19. 1 Cor. 11. 24, 25. He does not only simply allow, or barely recommend it to his Church, but as a Lawgiver, strictly



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commands and requires it ; and as a dying Testator, orders and enjoins the Observance of it. Christ says as clearly and expressly, Do this ; as God in any Precept of the Decalogue says, Thou shalt not do this. Now the Law of Christ should be more forcible and prevalent with you, than any Statute, or Law of the Land, to accelerate the Practice of this Duty.

There is as much danger in an unworthy Refusing this Sacrament, as there is in an unworthy Receiving it. You can go for no more than Half-Christians, if you totally abstain from this Ordinance ; which is, equally with the reception of the Sacrament of Baptism, a Badge and Cognizance, Note and Character of your Discipleship ; an Evidence and Demonstration, Sign and Expression, Token and Testimony of your Profession of Christianity. To live in a constant Neglect of this Sacrament, is a manifest Violation of your Baptifimal Vow. You promis'd at your Baptism, that you would obediently keep Gods holy Will and Commandments, and walk in the same all the Days of your Lives : But how apparently

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do you break this part of your Vow, by living in a long continued course of Disobedience to this so reasonable command of Christ? Yea, this unchristian Practice of yours, is, by interpretation, a kind of Renunciation of your Baptismal Covenant, entred into in your Infancy: you do, in a manner, openly disown and disavow it, when you will not yield, at Years of Discretion, to renew and confirm it; though often minded of it, frequently required, and called upon in the Name of Christ, to do it in the Use and Celebration of this Sacrament. And by being so utterly averse and unwilling to bind your selves by this means to Christ, and to ratifie and strengthen your Covenant with him, you seem to quit your Part in Christ, and to disclaim all Interest and Propriety in the precious Benefits purchased by his Blood and Death; and to be guilty of the basest Ingratitude, and greatest Unkindness imaginable, in refusing to remember in a solemn manner your Blessed Saviour, who has so lovingly remembred you, and been, with so much charge and cost, so great a Benefactor to you; and in unworthily undervaluing the inestimable Be-

nefits

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nefits of his Death and Passion, sealed and exhibited in the right Use of this Sacrament.

When Christ has said in plain terms, Do this; will you, in effect, dare to say, We will not do this; we will break a known Law, and will not regard the Authority of Christ; Are you ready to declaim against the Papists for their half Communion, and denying the Cup unto the Laity? When you are manifestly worse than Papists to your selves, in depriving your selves of both the Elements, and perpetually abstaining from the whole Communion. Will you persist in such Omission as you cannot justifie, but are forc'd, if reason'd with, to condemn your selves for?

Can you be so weak, and short in your reasoning, as to think, you reserve to your selves a freedom and liberty to sin for the present, without any great danger to you, by absenting your selves from the Sacrament, which would closely tie, and straitly bind you up to a stricter way, and more exact course of Life? never considering, that by your relation to God, and dependance upon him; by your car-  
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ly Covenant made in Baptism ; by all your hearing, or reading the Word of God ; and by every Prayer you have in all your Life put up to God, you are already strongly obliged to all that Duty, which the Sacrament of the Lords Supper would further engage you to perform.

Will you put off this Sacrament from Time to Time, and satisfy your selves at present, that you purpose to prepare, and receive hereafter ? why this is just as foolish and absurd, as to resolve, that when you have very greedily swallowed much more Poyson, then you will take the benefit of an Antidote ; that when you have stuffed your selves with trash, and fill'd your selves with abundant crudities, and by so doing weakened and destroyed your Appetite ; or by long Fasting quite lost your Stomach ; then you will hasten to a Feast : That when you have further despised the Riches of Divine Goodness and Grace, made more light of Christ, and of his precious Blood and Benefits ; and grieved his Spirit by longer Delays, and Non-improvement of Gospel-seasons, and golden Opportunities ; then you will  
seek

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*seek Reconciliation to God, Union to, and Communion with Christ, Purgation from Sin by the Blood of Christ, and the Consolation of the Spirit of Christ. You may delude your selves with Intentions and Resolutions to remember Christ in the Sacrament at some convenient Season hereafter ; but if you neglect and defer it now, you may lose your Senses and Memory, before ye have another Occasion offer'd you of remembring Christ in this Sacrament. You may die and depart, and Christ may come to you in particular Judgment, before you can enjoy another Opportunity of coming to the Table and Supper of your Lord: We may tell of your Death, and shew to others where you lie low in your Graves, before the Time comes that you should shew forth your Lords Death, in the celebration of the holy Communion. And if you should communicate upon a Death-bed ; the Sacrament so late sought and receiv'd, is very unlikely to assure Heaven to you when you die, when it was never desired and used by you, as a necessary Means of helping you to Holiness, and so of leading you on to Happiness, all your Life long. Let*

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*Let not humble, honest-hearted Christians debar and deprive themselves of this Ordinance, by over-looking, or mis-judging their own Qualifications: But finding, that they regard no Iniquity in their Hearts; and feeling in themselves vehement Longings and earnest Breathings after Christ, and continual Hungrings and thirstings after Righteousness; let them own with thankfulness, any measure of Grace discernable in themselves; and not deny to themselves what Christ so freely affords and offers them; but when invited to this Spiritual Feast, draw near with Faith, and take this holy Sacrament to their Comfort, and use it as a means of supplying their spiritual wants and needs.*

*Come, yea frequently come to the Lords Table. The Sacrament of Baptism is the Symbol and Seal of our Regeneration, or new Birth; and therefore it is to be received but once: But the holy Communion is the Symbol and Seal of our Spiritual Nutrition; and therefore, in reason, we are to receive it often. When Christ appointed that this should be done in remembrance of him, can*

*you*

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*you think he intended only a single, or seldom remembrance? Did not Christ himself, in giving that Command, and enacting that Law, intimate, insinuate, and suppose a reiterated, frequent remembrance of himself, when he said, as oft as ye drink it; the Apostle subjoining, as often as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, 1 Cor. 11. 25, 26. Will he then accept and take it kindly at your hand, if ye do it so seldom, as is next to a total Omission of it? Did the Primitive Christians communicate every day, or at least every Lords Day; and can you content your selves to live many Weeks, Months, and Years without it?*

*Did you but know and understand, consider and meditate of your own spiritual great Necessities, Wants, Weaknesses; and of the certain, considerable Advantages of a frequent Participation of the holy Communion; you would quickly find a Law within your selves, to bind and oblige you; a strong Argument and Impellent within your own Breasts, a pressing powerful Motive in your own Bosoms, to draw you to the Sacrament.*

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*Sacrament of the Lords Supper : you would as soon forget to take your daily Bread, as neglect to receive this blessed Sacrament, upon any good Occasion, and fit Opportunity offer'd to you.*

*Among all your Cares, take special care to feed and nourish, to strengthen and comfort, to cleanse and save your Souls. Among all your Employments, find some leisure to remember your Saviour, to meet with your dearest Lord, and to receive the seasonable, plentiful, rich Supplies of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, Phil. 1. 19.*

*Will you pretend to value a Sermon, and yet unworthily slight the Sacrament ? Seem to make Conscience of hearing two Sermons usually every Lords Day ; and yet let your receiving the holy Communion twice or thrice a Year at most, suffice your Souls, and satisfy your Consciences ? Have you been swift to hear some thousands of Sermons in your time ; and yet so slow, some of you, as not once to receive this holy Sacrament in the many Years of your whole Live ; though so very many of the Sermons preach'd to you, urg'd and press'd you,*



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you, with due Preparation, to receive the Communion? Know ye not, that the Sacrament has, in sundry respects, the advantage of a Sermon? for in the Sacrament there is a Sermon to the Eye, as well as to the Ear. Preaching alone cannot possibly so clearly and lively set forth the Evil of Sin, and the Love of Christ to you; as the visible Representation of the Crucifixion and bloody Death of Christ, made in this Sacrament, by the breaking of the Bread, and pouring out of the Wine before you, is apt to do. Besides that, the Sacrament calls you to a more solemn previous Examination of your selves, than a Sermon does; and requires you publickly to renew, your whole Covenant with God and Christ; whereas a Sermon ordinarily engages you to some one or few particular Duties only: And the Sacrament is a Seal and Confirmation of the Covenant on Gods part, of all the great and precious Promises made in Christ to penitent Believers, as well as a Ratification of the Covenant on your part. Again: The Sacrament has a singular Virtue and Efficacy, to join and unite you more nearly and closely,

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close'y to Christ your Head, and to knit and cement you more firmly and strongly one to another in Christian Love. And is moreover a powerful Instrument, and effectual Means of conveying spiritual strength from Christ, and Grace sufficient to enable you to perform the Covenant made and repeated by you, and to practise the Precepts explicated and inculcated in the very many profitable Sermons preached to you.

5. You that are Parents, and Masters of Families, in the Fear of God, set up the Duties, and maintain the Exercises of Christs Religion in your Families. Let Prayer and Reading the sacred Scripture, and a course of Catechizing, be things they are used to, and well acquainted with. Resolve with Joshua, As for me and my House, we will serve the Lord, Jos. 24. 15. And vow deliberately with holy David, I will walk within my House with a perfect heart, Psal. 101. 2. Walk so closely and constantly with God, and be so faithfully obedient to him, that your Children may fare the better for your Covenant-Interest in him, and relation to him. Train, breed, and bring up your Children in  
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the nurture and admonition of the Lord, *Eph. 6. 4. Teach them to know, fear, love, and serve God, and with Abraham, command your Children and your Household, that they keep the Way of the Lord, Gen. 18. 19. This will be a means to propagate Religion to Posterity. Suffer not your Children to have their Heads and Humours; but labour betimes to break them of their Wills, lest by their Stubbornness and Disobedience they break your very Hearts at last. Adonijah was a person unlikely ever to come to good, when his Father was so indulgent to him, as not to displease him at any time, in saying, Why hast thou done so, 1 Kings 1. 6. Follow the Direction, which St. Austin gives to teach Men to do the Works of Abraham: Kill sinful Pleasures, says he, and slay Youthful Lusts in your Children; by this means you will offer such a Sacrifice to God, as Abraham did.*

*Let this Thought often arise in your Minds, that the young Plants, that stand in the little Nurseries of your private Families, will, according to your care or neglect of them, grow up to be good.*

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good and useful, or vicious and noxious Members in Church and State ; and so the Publick will be profited, or prejudiced, by your well or ill ordering the Dispositions and Manners of those that belong unto your charge.

Restrain and regulate the rude and loose Manners both of your Children and Servants ; Labour to instil good Principles into them ; and to render all your seasonable Instructions, prosperous and profitable by your good Examples : Domestical Examples are very notably leading and drawing, and wonderfully powerful and influential. Your Children and Servants, they have their Maintenance from you, Dependance upon you, and are much inferiour to you ; and so are apt to eye and imitate you, and ready to conform themselves to you.

You that are Parents, is it not enough that you have conveyed and communicated a corrupt Nature to your Children ; but will you proceed to deprave them further by your ill Examples, and to draw forth the Corruption of their Nature into manifold actual Miscarriages and Transgressions ? Will you make your  
Children,

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Children, as far as ever lies in your power, the Children of the Devil? You that are Masters, will you make your Servants the Servants of Sin, and bind them Apprentices to the very Devil? Will you dare any longer to Corrupt and Debauch your Children and Servants, by your frequent Drunkenness, common Swearing, vain and loose Talking, Profanation of the Lords Day, Atheistical, ungodly Living? Let Governours of Families charge themselves to give better Examples.

6. Yea, let every one of you study to be Exemplary, in every relation and capacity, in every carriage and deportment, both within the private Family, and before all the Neighbourhood round about you. Let this consideration discourage and deter you from being ill-exemplary, that if at last you should go to Hell yourselves, your own Damnation will receive aggravation from the damnation of others, who have been Sinners and Sufferers through your ill examples: Which may be the reason why Dives desired to keep his Brethren out of the place of Torment, Luke

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16. 28. Nay, St. Austin goes a great deal higher, in those very notable Words of his, which deserve to be pondred in your most serious thoughts, If thou hast given an ill example, says he, thou shalt one day give an account for so many wicked persons as thou hast shewn an ill example to, tho' they have not followed thy ill example. For it is no thank to thee, that they did not imitate and take after thee. If thou dost not sincerely repent, and faithfully endeavour, to the utmost of thy power, to reclaim those who by thy means have become vicious ; thou shalt at last be sorely punish'd, not only for those that have miscarried, but for all those that might have miscarried, as if they had indeed miscarried through thy ill example ; because if God had left them, thy ill example was enough to make them miscarry for ever.

7. And lastly, Remember and consider every day of your Lives, what are the true and proper ends of Life. Think, and conclude, that you were not sent into this World to eat and drink, to lie down to sleep, and rise up to play. Be asham'd to come short of meer Heathens ; blush to read what Cato in Cicero says of himself : No body could ever yet find me idle and unemploy'd. With Curius Dentatus,  
that

## Epistle Dedicatory.

that noble and worthy Roman, count it more eligible to be dead indeed, and not to live at all than to be dull and drowsy, idle and unactive, useles and unprofitable in the World. Reckon with your selves, that Life is a business, not good cheer: That your work and business in this World, is, not to labour for the meat which perisheth, to seek and study to satisfy a delicate, wanton, luxurious appetite, and to take your fill of carnal, sensual, corporeal pleasure; to lay up for your selves Treasures upon Earth, *Mat. 6. 19.* to heap up Silver as the dust, and prepare raiment as the Clay, *Job 27. 16.* to acquire secular Grandeur and Honour, *Laborare in titulum Sepulchri*, (as Seneca speaks) to take unwearied pains for a pompous ambitious Funeral, an honourable Inscription upon your Monument, a swelling Title upon your Tomb stone, but to store your selves with such good things as will bear you company beyond the Grave, enrich and ennoble you, and render you worthy, and honourable for ever in another World. Give all Diligence to be vertuous, and gracions; to get great power over your selves, and to become your own men, which the fore-cited Moralist tells you, is absolute liberty, and an inestimable good: To govern your selves, and to inspect and do good to others: To lay out your selves for  
God;

## Epistle Dedicatory.

God; to lay up durable treasures in heaven, *Mat. 6. 20.* to gain and obtain the praise of God; to press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, *Phil. 3. 14.* So to run, that you may obtain an incorruptible Crown, *1 Cor. 9. 24, 25.* and have an entrance ministred unto you abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, *2 Pet. 1. 11.*

*I have written a long, yet, I hope, not tedious Epistle to you: It is large, from an heart enlarged toward you, 2 Cor. 6. 11. I will detain you no longer from the Treatise it self, to which you will find many Quotations annexed; let none condemn them, before they have read them, it may be, then you will judge them pertinent, pregnant, pleasant.*

*I desire you to accept of these seasonable fruits of my Ministerial Labours among you, as a Token and Testimony of my cordial Love, and unfeigned Affection to your Souls.*

*It remains, that you think and consider well with your selves, that when the most important Truths are, not only deliver'd in publick, and spoken in your Ears, but brought home to you, Houses, put into your Hands, and presented to your Eyes; how can you escape, if you will not lay them to your hearts, but neglect and reject*  
such



## Epistle Dedicatory.

*Such means and helps of your Instruction and Salvation. O read and consider them, and lay your Consciences closer than your Eyes to them; if they prevail not to reform and amend your Lives and Manners, they will come in, and witness against you, and heavily condemn you another Day.*

*Now that the only wise and good God, who put it into my heart to undertake this Work, and assisted me in it, to the end of it (for tho I laboured, yet not I, but the Grace of God which was with me, 1 Cor. 15. 10.) would graciously vouchsafe to guide and direct your minds and hearts into the knowledge, belief, consideration, love and practice of the great and weighty Truths contained in it, and would effectually bless and prosper it (and all other serious, profitable discourses, that have been already in 29 years of my Ministry among you, or shall hereafter, by me, or others, be further made unto you) to the spiritual Edification, and eternal Salvation of your Souls, is the earnest Desire, and hearty daily importunate Prayer of,*

Dear Friends,

Your Servant in the Work  
Of the Ministry,

For Jesus sake,

JOHN WADE

REDEMPTION

## Redemption of Time a good Duty in evil Daies.

*Ephes. 5. 16. Redeeming the Time, because  
the Daies are evil.*

### C H A P. I.

*The Coherence of the Words. The Text divided.*

*The Doctrine propounded. The Method laid  
down for the clearing and opening of it. What  
it is to redeem the Time : the Phrase in the  
Text may signify these four Things ; ( 1. ) To  
buy back the Time that is past : In what Sence  
that may be done. ( 2. ) To buy up the Time  
that is present ; that is, to forgo or part with any  
thing for it ; and to make it our own, and use it  
for our spiritual and eternal Advantage. ( 3. )  
Not only to buy it up, but to buy it out ; to get it  
out of the hands of the Devil, and the World,  
and the distracting Cares, and tempting Plea-  
sures of it. ( 4. ) To use all Weariness and Wis-  
dom of Behaviour, all prudent and pious arts, to  
secure our selves from Snares, and to preserve our  
selves from spiritual Dangers, and from running  
rashly and unseasonably into any temporal Suffer-  
ing and Calamity.*

**T**H E whole Chapter contains several  
Exhortations, some to General, and  
others to Particular Duties. ( 1. ) To  
General Duties such as concern and  
oblige all sorts of Christians ; from the first to  
the 22<sup>th</sup>. Verse. ( 2. ) To special and particu-  
lar

lar Duties, which relate particularly to *Husbands and Wives*, in their Carriage and Behaviour one towards another; from the 22<sup>th</sup>. to the End.

In the former Part of the Chapter he gives general Exhortations, to a *following of God*, *vers.* 1. to a *walking in Love*, in Imitation of Christ, *vers.* 2. to the fleeing of *Fornication*, and all *Filthiness* and *Impurity*, so much as in *Word*, or only by way of *Fest*; from the Beginning of the third, to the end of the sixth *verse*. To have no familiar Converse, no intimate Communion and Fellowship with the Wicked, but rather to *reprove* their evil Deeds, and wicked Works? from the seventh to the fifteenth *verse*. And to that end to *walk circumspectly* and *wisely*, and to express their Circumspection and Christian Wisdom by this excellent good Effect of it, the *Redeeming* of their *Time*; in the 13<sup>th</sup>. and 16<sup>th</sup>. *verses*; See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as Fools, but as wise, redeeming the Time, because the *Daies* are evil.

The Words of my Text do easily break into these two Parts; (1.) *A Duty, Redeeming the Time*; and (2.) *a special Ground and Reason of the Duty, because the Daies are evil*. I begin with the former.

*It is the Duty of a Christian to redeem the Time.*  
For Explication of the Duty I shall shew.

I. What it is to *redeem* the Time.

II. What the *Time* is, that is to be redeemed.

I. What it is to *redeem* the Time. The Word in the *Original* imports and signifies several things.

1. The

1. The greek Word ἐξαγοράζω is commonly rendred *redimenter*, redeeming. Now to *redeem* Time, is properly to *buy back* the Time that is past, to regain Time formerly mispent, to recover, as it were, the Jewel of Time that has been formerly lost. Time once let slip is indeed *physically* irrecoverable. We can never truly and properly live one Day, one Hour of our Lives over again. But in a *moral* Consideration Time is accounted as regained :

( 1. ) When we seriously consider, and sadly think upon our former evil Waies; weep and wail over our past Sins, lament and repent of all our lost and mispent Time, and with all our Hearts and Souls that we had ordered aright the whole Course of our Conversations, and lived and acted *alwaies* as we ought; and by condemning our selves for our old Follies, undo ( as far as in us lies ) whatever formerly we have ill done.

And ( 2. ) when by *double Diligence*, and extraordinary Care and Endeavour, we do that in the remaining Part of our Life, which should have been in some good measure done before, and which is ordinarily work enough for a Man's whole Life : As a Traveller that has staid too long by the Way, when he finds the Day is far spent, and that it is not long to Night, he puts on, and makes all haste and speed, and goes as many Miles in a few Hours as he did before in many. Or, as a Merchant who has suffered very great Losses, doubles his Diligence in his future Traffic, and so gets up

his Estate : in which Sence both the Traveller and Merchant are said to redeem their Time. Thus the Christian, by his *Activity and Industry extraordinary*, does, as it were, recover his lost Time, he does in effect redeem it. To live much in a little Time, is in a manner as good, as if the very Time past were really lived over again : it is in some sence as much as if the same Time were return'd into our hands, because the same thing, which should have been done in the *whole course* of our Life, is effectually done in some one Part of it better employed than the rest of it.

Neither is this any Encouragement to a wicked Person to loose and let go the present Time, because it may be redeem'd again after a sort ; for they that thus redeem it, must pay *full dear* for it ; and 'tis very uncertain, whether he that now lets it slip, shall ever have the happiness to redeem it hereafter, though at the highest Rate that can be. That is the first particular it is to *buy back* the Time that is past : and this comes nearest to the *Latin Word* [ *redimentes* ] [ redeeming ] the Time.

2. The Greek Word *ἐξαγοράζω*, does not necessarily suppose a former Possession of what is now bought, but properly signifies *buying* only, or the *parting* with one Thing for the *purchasing* of another. The word is properly rendered *emercantes*, and may be well translated *buying the Time*. *Ἐξαγοράζω* then may signify, not only to *buy back* the Time that is past, but to *buy up* the Time that is present : and this is rather intended by the Apostle in the Text. Now  
it

if we take *redeeming* here to signify no more than *buying or purchasing*, it speaks then these two Things ; (1.) Redeeming the Time is the forgoing of any thing that would any way hinder us from taking the Time. (2.) The making it our own, by using and improving it to all possible Advantages : as in *buying* a thing [1.] we pay the Price of it, then take it into our Possession and Use.

(1.) *Redeeming*, or *buying* the Time, it is the forgoing of any thing that would any way hinder us from taking the Time : For if you part with nothing, says St. Austin, and yet get something you had not before ; you either found it, or had it given you, or got it by Inheritance : but when you part with somewhat to purchase somewhat, then you buy a Thing.

*Beza* upon the Place, makes the *Redeeming* here to be a *Metaphor* taken from Merchants, who very curiously and carefully consider what the several Wares and Commodities be, and ever prefer a little Profit before much Pleasure, and choose a small Gain before great Delights. We daily see, that they who use Markets and Fairs will lay aside their Pleasures and Recreations, and often lose their sleep, and their set meals, and deny themselves many Conveniencies for the present, that so they may closely attend their Businesses, and know and take their Advantages, and may not lose any good Bargain, but be sure to meet with the best Wares, and to lay out their Money for the choicest Commodities. Thus, in a spiritual Sence, we should be greedy and covetous

Buyers of the Time; we should be *wise Merchants* let any thing go to gain the Time ; be willing to bestow our *Care, Pains, Labour, Diligence, which is, as it were, our Money*, which we give or the Commodity of an opportunity of doing or receiving good : be ready to forgo and part with our Ease or Pleasure, our Profit and temporal Advantage, our Honour and Esteem in the World, rather than lose the blessed Occasion of trading for Heaven, and improving our Time for spiritual Advantage. *Sertorius the Roman General*, in his Passage into *Spain*, yielded to pay the tribute demanded by certain barbarous People, that inhabited the *Pyrenean Mountains*, over which he was to pass, at which his Souldiers were offended, and said, that it was too much Shame and Dishonour for a *Proconsul of Rome* to pay Tribute to vile barbarous People: but the wise *Commander* gave his Souldiers this sober Answer, that *he bought a Commodity, which such as aspire to high Enterprizes, must take up readily at any Rate*. And should not we be much more willing to give any Rate for the spiritual Redeeming of Time ? surely we should not stick at any thing ; we should not think Time dear, or an *hard Bargain*, whatsoever it costs us.

Somewhat to be sure it will cost us ; and *Calvin* here puts the Question, *quodnam erit pretium redemptionis ?* what Price must we give for the redeeming of time ? The Price is plainly this, saies he, *To shun the infinite Snares that would entangle us, to free our selves from the Cares and Pleasures of the World, and to renounce and part with whatever would hinder us from using our Time*

*Time aright.* To redeem the Time, saies Zanchy, is only not to suffer Time to slip away unfruitfully, that we may enjoy our Pleasure and Leisure ; but rather than lose our Time, to suffer the Loss of any thing. He is said to redeem the Time (saies the Reverend Davenant) who yields to the worst Conditions that can be, so they be but lawful, that he may be able to cleave to God, to hold the Faith, and to keep a clear and a good Conscience. Whatever he paies for it, he counts this a very good Bargain. Daniel would redeem Time for Praier, though he ventur'd his very Life for it. *Dan. 6. 10.* David had rather be mockt and despis'd by Michael, and lose his Honour, than part with a special Opportunity of dancing before the Ark. *2 Sam. 6. 20.* A sincere Christian had rather be scorn'd and nick-nam'd, reproached and reviled, than neglect any special good Season of honouring his God, and advantaging his own or others Souls. The Apostles would suffer Shame, *Acts 5. 41.* endure Reproaches and Imprisonments, rather than omit any Occasion of teaching and preaching Jesus Christ. Rather than the Primitive Christians would lose any Advantage of serving God, and consulting their Souls good, they would suffer joyfully the spoiling of their Goods; *Heb. 10. 34.* yea, rather than lose that, they would lose their very Life and Blould *Acts 21. 13.* *I am ready, not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem, for the Name of the Lord Jesus.* This was the Price St. Paul was ready to give to redeem the Time for Christs Service. Moses, the adopted Son of



*Pharaoh's* Daughter, a Person brought up at Court, who had the Education of a Prince, and large Expectations of rare and extraordinary temporal Advantages: when he *came to Age*, and well understood the inviting alluring Circumstances of a temporal *Felicity*, and was most capable of tasting the Pleasures of a prosperous State, and Courtly Life; this *Moses*, at this Time, was willing to part with the Pleasures and Treasures of *Egypt*, and refused the Honour of being called the Son of *Pharaoh's* Daughter, to gain an opportunity of bearing the honourable Reproach of Christ, and of suffering out of Choice and Election most comfortable Affliction with the People of God. *Heb. 11. 24, 25, 26.* And so the famous *Galeacius Caracciolus*, a Courtier to the Emperour *Charles the fifth*, Nephew to *Pope Paul the forth*, and the only Son, and lawful Heir of the *Markquess of Vico*; being powerfully wrought upon by *Peter Martyr's* Sermon (like another *Moses*) freely forsook his Markquessdom, the Riches, Honors and Pleasures of *Italy*, and of the Emperour's Court; to enjoy God, and the Purity of the Gospel, and the Peace of his Conscience, and the Fellowship and Society of the People of God, in a mean and private Condition in a poor *Geneva*; notwithstanding variety of mighty entisments from his Father, his Wife, his Children, and Acquaintance to renounce the Profession of the Reformed Religion, and to return to Popery. To redeem, or buy the Time, it is to part with somewhat to gain the Time. And then,

(2.) To

(2.) To improve and make the best of it for our good. To buy the Time is to make it *our own*: now we make the Time *our own*, when we make a *special Advantage* of it; when we employ and lay it out in doing whatever we do to the Glory of God, 1 Cor. 10. 31. when we spend it to the good of others, Gal 6. 10. when we use our Time to work out our own Salvation with fear and trembling, to make our Calling and Election sure, to get and grow in Grace, to provide for our precious immortal Souls, and to settle and secure our everlasting State and eternal Welfare. That is the second Sense of the Words.

3. Εξαγοραζέσθαι χρόνον it is not only to buy up the Time, but also to buy it out: and this is the *most proper* rendring of the Word. As when you see others watch and wait for a Commodity which is for their turn, and you presently clap hold upon it, and laid down the Price of it, before any one else can get it into their hand: So, to redeem the Time, it is to gain it out of *Hucksters hands*, as I may say. Pleasure and Play, on the one side; or overmuch Labour and excessive Care for the things of the World, on the other side; these, or such things as these, have got the Possession of our Time at present, or at least are ready to seise and lay hold upon it. Now we should not suffer them to engross it, but by all means strive to keep it out, or else to recover it out of their hands, that, we may make a *special Use and Benefit* of it. Our Time must be gain'd out of the hand of the World, yea out of the hand

of the very Devil, who is continually busie to get Possession of it. *Since the World is so corrupt, the Devil seems, saies Calvin to exercise such a Tyranny, that our Time cannot be consecrated and devoted to God, unless it be after a sort redeemed.*

4. The learned Dr. *Hammond* saies, that the Phrase of Redeeming the Time, of *gaining or buying the Season*, seems to be a Proverbial Expression, which use had made to signify more than the very Letter of the Words import : and he produceth several Instances out of Authors, from which he gathers, that the meaning of redeeming, or *buying out*, or *gain the Time*, is this ; for Christians to use good Caution and Cunning, Wisdom and Dexterity, to save themselves from Spiritual Dangers, and the Snares that are near their Souls : to use all prudent artificial Devices ; to preserve themselves from the evil Times in which they live ; Times of carnal Sensuality, and high Corruption ; and so of great Temptation, and present Danger to their Souls. Besides this primary meaning of the Phrase, he saies it may be applied also to that other Prudence for avoiding of Persecutions, as those are expressed in Scripture by evil Daies : not to throw our selves upon Dangers unseasonably, where there is no probable Advantage in our Prospect : but to speak and exhort when it is likely to prosper, and at other Times to refrain. And this saies he, may properly be styled *gaining the Time*, watching Opportunities ; and when interposing would prove gainless, then to hold the peace, and expect some fitter Season. And in this latter

Sense

Sense the most learned *Grotius* expounds the Phrase: *Redeem the Time*, saies he, that is, by any Pains and Labour, and by all fair Language, and respective Speeches, and innocent condescending Carriages, avoid the dangers of the Times you live in, and lengthen out your own Tranquility.

Thus I have opened the First Term, and shewn you what is meant by the *ἐξαγοράζουσα*, commonly translated [ *redeeming* ] the Time.

## C H A P. II.

*What the Time is that ought to be redeemed*, largely explained. Opportunity more than Time: 'tis Time with an Aptness and Fitness it has for some good. The Opportunity to be redeemed is either General, or Particular: The General is all the Time of our Enjoyment of the glorious Light of the blessed Gospel. The Particular Opportunity five-fold. (1.) The Morning of our Age. The well-redeeming your younger Daies will be most acceptable to God, will make you more serviceable to others, and prove most profitable to your selves. They that redeem the Time of their Youth, are likely to redeem their riper Years. Instances of those that have redeemed their youthful Daies. (2.) The Morning of the Week, the first day of every Week. Ministers, Magistrates, People, Masters and Servants, Poor and Rich, should study to redeem this Opportunity. and take heed they redeem it not by halves. Our Observation of the Lord's Day a good help to the Redeeming of all the six Daies following, both as to Temporals, and as to Spirituals (3.) The Morning of every day; that's an opportunity of giving God the first and, best of our Time. By

*redeem.*

deeming the Morning, we are likely to redeem the whole Day following. (4.) The Society and Company of the most Religious and Godly : in which we have an happy Occasion both of doing and of receiving good. (5.) The special Seasons of practising and performing Particular Duties, of getting and encreasing, acting and exercising Particular Graces, must be observed, embraced, and improved by us.

II. **W**HAT is the Time that is to be thus redeem'd. What is meant here by *τοῦ χρόνου*. This Word is sometimes used largely and indifferently, to note Time in common ; which is only the Succession of so many minutes, Hours, Daies, or Years, one after another, from the Beginning of a Man's Life to the End thereof. So *χρόνος* is all one with *χρόνος*. But most properly *χρόνος* is taken in a narrower Sense than *χρόνος*, and is used to denote not Time simply, but Opportunity, Time with Advantage. Opportunity is the Cream of Time, the Flower of Time. And in this Sense we we must take the *χρόνος* here in the Text : not only for the passing away of Hours, and sliding away of Minutes, for the bare Space, mere Leisure of any thing ; but for proper Seasons, fair Occasions. good Hours, and fit Opportunities : Opportunity is Time with an Aptness and Fitness that it has some good with a suitableness and serviceableness to our use and Advantage : 'tis a meeting of Time and Means together, for the accomplishing of our End and the effecting of any Work or Business.

Now Opportunity is either General or Particular.

The

The General Opportunity to be redeemed.

*The whole Course of our Lives is a General Opportunity of doing and receiving good.* We are to look upon all our Time, which we live under the glorious Light of the blessed Gospel, as an happy Opportunity of laying out of our selves for God, and for our own and others Advantage. When God continues the Gospel among us ; when he daily calls us to Faith and Repentance ; when he stands ready with Strength and Assistance ; when he publisheth great and precious Promises ; when the golden Scepter is held out by God to us, as it was to *Esther by Abasuerus* ; c. 5. 2. when gracious Offers, merciful Tenders, kind and loving Invitations are made and repeated, and very sweet and comfortable Encouragements propounded and assured to penitent Sinners in the Ministry of the Word ; this is *space given for Repentance* : *Rev. 2. 21.* this is a golden Season of Grace, in which we may have Christ, and all his precious and saving Benefits, upon the reasonable Terms and acceptable Conditions of the Gospel. When the Trumpet of the Jubile soundeth ; when Liberty to the Captives, and the Opening of the Prison to them that are bound is proclaimed ; *Behold, now is the accepted Time ; behold, now is the Day of Salvation* : *O receive not the Grace of God in vain* : *2 Cor. 6. 1, 2.* lose not so long and large a Season : make your Advantage of the Time of the Gospel, be thankful for it, and faithful in the Use and Improvement of it : close with the Gospel, and  
daily

daily and earnestly endeavour and pray that it may be made effectual to you.

*Repent, believe, sincerely obey in this thy Day.*

*Repent* : think upon thy Waies, be sorry for thy Sins : hate them, forsake them : repent with a *Repentance from dead Works*, never to be repented of. So change thy *Mind*, as to change thy *Manners*, to reform and alter the Course of thy Life for the future. So truly repent, as to take care to *bring forth Fruits meet for repentance*.

*Believe*, not with a bare historical, a meer intellectual Faith ; not with an idle, dronish, wholly ineffectual Assent ; but with a *practical, active operative Belief*.

So believe the Word of God, as to take it seriously, and in good earnest, for the only rule of thy Conversation, in Matters necessary to Salvation. So firmly receives and assent to the Divine Testimony, as to have thy Heart rightly affected, and thy Life powerfully influenced by it. So cordially believe the Truth of the Gospel, as to resolve, and on all Occasions to endeavour to *carry suitably* to such Belief ; to live and act as a Person that does indeed believe it, and to *answer the end for which Divine Truth was revealed, which is the bringing us to good Lives*.

So yield Assent to the Doctrine of the Gospel, as to close and comply with the Terms of the Gospel, and heartily to consent to the whole Duty of Man, contain'd and delivered in the Word of God and Gospel of Christ.

So Assent to the Commands of the Gospel as

*true*

*true*, as withal to love and like them, to choose and embrace them as *good*, and as *good for thee*, yea as incomparably *better for thee* to observe, than any *other Rule* that possibly can be respected by thee, whatever they cause thee to lose or suffer here in this World. So give your undoubted Assent to them, as to cleave closely, and stick invincibly to them, against all flattering, or affrighting Temptations to the contrary; and still to engage, and charge, and provoke thy self, to conform thy whole Heart and Life to them.

Farther; So assent to the Truth of the Gospel Promises, as to take care to perform the necessary Conditions of them: to trust in the Promises of the Gospel with an *obediential Affiance*, with an obsequious and dutiful Reliance: to trust in them, *according to the Tenour of them*: to trust in the Promises of Pardon and Remission, in the Exercise of sincere and unfeigned Repentance: and in this Promise of Sanctification, in the Use of Gospel-Ordinances and Means, and diligent Improvement of the Grace of God already communicated and received: and in the Promises of Life everlasting, in the way of new and sincere Obedience. Assent to the Promises, not only that they are *true and real*; but that they are also the *most valuable* that can be; *exceeding great and precious Promises*: 2 Pet. 1. 4. so as to prefer the Promises of God above all the Proffers of the World, as better than any thing that the Devil can offer, or the World afford.

Farther



Farther yet ; So assent to the Truth of the Threatnings of the Word, as to *fear* and stand in aw of them, and to study to avoid those sins, which will put thee in Danger of temporal and eternal Sufferings ; and to keep thy self free from the Fear of the Menaces of *Men*, while thou art in the way of thy Duty to *God*.

Believe the whole Word of God ; and

Believe in all the Persons of the holy and blessed Trinity. So assent to the Truth of whatsoever is spoken in the Scripture of God, and Christ, and the Spirit of God and Christ, as *deliberately to choose* God the Father, Son, and holy Ghost, for thy *Portion* and Treasure, thy Happiness and *chief Good*.

To bring thy Heart to own, love, honour, serve and worship *God the Father*, as thy good and bountiful Creator and Preserver, and very merciful God Redeemer by Jesus Christ : and freely and gladly to *consent* to have God the Father for thy Covenant-Friend, and reconciled gracious Father.

And to accept, with all Love and Thankfulness, even a *crucified Christ*, for thy only *Lord and Saviour*, to bring thee to God, thy chiefest Good, by reconciling thy Person and Nature to him ; to recover and bring thee back both in Heart and Life to God : and to rest and rely upon Christ, and on God only in and through Christ, for Justification, Sanctification, and eternal Salvation, *according to the Promises of the Gospel*,

Cordially receive him *in all his Offices*. And here,

I. Ac-

1. Accept of Christ as a *Priest*, to save thee by the offering of himself a Sacrifice in thy stead, and by making Intercession on thy behalf. And labour to *answer the ends of his Death*, by Purity and Holinessness of Heart and Life : and to *act becoming his Intercession* : to live so, as it may be *fit* for Christ with Honour to present your Works and Services to his Father, to be accepted by him : to do nothing but what is *worthy* of such a Mediatour as Christ is, to present unto God on your behalf. Now tell me is any act of Profaneness, Sin and Wickedness, a *fit Action* for Christ to take, and present unto his Father for Divine Acceptance ? Certainly our Actions must have the *Truth*, though not the *Perfection* of good Works: for otherwise 'twere a Thing *unbecoming* Christ to *present* them, and *unbecoming* God to *accept* them : for in so doing, Christ must become a *Patron of Sin* ; and God an Owner of the Work, and an Encourager of the Workers of Iniquity. O then take care that your Actions be such as may be *fit* to be presented by Christ unto his Father, and to be accepted by God, in and thorough Christ. This is the Way to honour Christ considered as a *Priest*.

2. Accept of Christ as a *Prophet*, to teach and instruct thee ; thorowly to *teach both thy Head and Heart* : and be willing and forward to learn of Christ, and to be taught by him the *Truth as it is in Jesus*, and to profit both by his *Doctrine and Example*.

3. Accept of Christ, not only for thy Priest  
and

and Saviour ; and for thy Prophet, Teacher and Instructour, but for thy wise and holy *Law-giver*, and for thy sovereign *King* and Governour, to rule and to reign over thee. Give up thy self in hearty Subjection to the *Person and Authority* of Christ, and vow and be ready to perform sincere Obedience to all the *Particular Commands* of Christ. When others cry, these are *hard Sayings*, who can bear them ? do you profess that *his Commands are not grievous* ; and do thou say from thy very Heart, *I delight to do thy Will*, O Christ. Love and delight in the *Laws* of Christ, and choose and strive to *keep* and observe them, when others *censure*, break and violate them. While other Men dishonour Christ, and put him to an open shame, and cause his worthy Name to be blasphemed ; let thy Life lead Men to high and excellent Thoughts of Christ, and of his *Laws*, and *Waies*, and Government. This is the right Acceptance of Christ, so *to receive Christ Jesus the Lord*, as to purpose and endeavour to *walk in him*.

And then for the other Act of Faith : Have not only a bare Opinion of Christ's Fidelity, but trust in Christ with a *practical Trust* : So thoroughly trust him, as to *venture* all thy Happiness on him in his own way. Trust him so far, as to be sincerely and heartily willing to leave and forsake all to follow him : to part with Sin, and the World, yea Life it self *for him*, who will not suffer thee to be finally a Loser by him : to be ready to relinquish all that thou seest and possessest here,

for

for things invifible, which Chrift hath promifed to render to the Believer in the other World.

And fo believe what is faid concerning the *Holy Ghof*t, as heartily to believe in the *Holy Ghof*t : *Con*ſent to take him for thy Teacher, and Guide ; Sanctifier, and Quickner ; Advocate, and Comforter.

Enter into *ſolemn Covenant* with, reſign and give up thy ſelf to the Worſhip and Service of the ſacred Trinity. Be fully reſolv'd to *live to God and Chriſt* ; and to *worſhip in the Spirit*, to be led by the Spirit, to walk in the Spirit, and to bring forth the Fruits of the Spirit.

Believe, and learn to *live by Faith* ; and let thy Faith *work by Love*, and ſhew it ſelf by good Works, and be productive of the *Obedience of Faith*. And let thy Obedience be voluntary and cheerful, uniform and univerſal, conſtant and perpetual.

Thus, thus improve the precious Season of *Gospel-Light*, Grace, and Strength, by plainly and fully *coming up to the Terms*, and faithfully performing the great and neceſſary Conditions of the *Gospel*. Honour and glorify the Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*; by entertaining, and walking worthy of the *Gospel of Chriſt*.

There was a memorable State ſet up in the *Iſle of Rhodes*, in honour of the Sun, which once in a Day is ſaid to ſhine upon that *Iſland*, be the Air in all other Parts never ſo overcaſt with Clouds. But we enjoy a greater and higher Priviledg than they : *The Sun of Righteouſneſs* ſhines upon this our *Iſland*, and affords the *Light* of the bleſſed *Gospel*, not only once every

every Day, but all the Day long every Day: And now shall we be so blind and unthankful, as to take no notice of it; so idle and careless, as to make no use of it? Since the the Light of the Gospel does clearly and sweetly beam out in our Faces, when the Air is dark abroad, and many other places are cover'd with the thick Clouds of Ignorance; let us rejoice in the Light, *John 5. 35. and walk in the Light of the Glorious Gospel, 1 John 1. 7. as Children of the Light, Eph. 5. 8. and of the Day; 1 Thess. 5. 5.* and then we shall be as so many Statues set up in Honour of Christ the Sun of Righteousness, that shines in his Lustre and Strength upon us.

But besides the *General Opportunity* of the Continuance of the Gospel, which is afforded to many all their Life long: I say, besides this, there are *some Parcels* and Portions of our Lives, some Daies and Hours of our Time, that are *Particular and special Opportunities* above others; as namely these following.

*The first Particular Opportunity to be redeemed.*

1. *The Morning of our Age*: the Time of Youth, and Health, and Strength: this is an Opportunity of providing for Eternity: this is a fit Season of working out our Salvation; of laying up in store against a Time of Sickness, an Hour of Weakness, and the Day of Death. This is a Time, wherein both *Body and Mind* are strong and vigorous. This is an Age meet for Impression, capable of Instruction, and fit for Action. The Wise Man calls young Men to redeem this choicest Part of their

their Time : to think of him early, who lov'd and minded us so early ( *Ecclef. 12. 1.* ) Remember now thy Creator in the Daies of thy Youth, [ thy choice Daies ] while the evil Daies come not, nor the Years draw nigh ; when thou shalt say, I have no Pleasure in them. The Daies of Youth are good Daies : the Time of Health and Strength is a good Time indeed : Now the Understanding is quick and perceptive, the Memory strong and retentive, and the Body able and fit for Service and Employment. The Daies of old Age, they are evil Daies : then the Eyes grow dimm, the Ears deaf, the Hands tremble, the Legs are feeble, and the Memory fails. Old Folk they can't do as they have done : they can't follow the Markets, and manage House-hold-Businesses, and order the affairs of their Families and Callings, with such quickness and dispatch as formerly. Now, if Old Age be unfit for any Action, then to be sure 'tis most unfit for the Exercises of Religion ; it is most weak and strengthless here. Pray tell me, what wilt thou do to remember thy Creator then when thy Memory fails thee ? Wilt thou be fit to turn to God, when thou art unable to turn thy self in thy Bed ? how canst thou serve the Lord thy God with all thy Strength, when all, or almost all thy Strength is gone ?

Such of us as have been prodigal of this precious Time, let us lay our Loss to heart, and mourn in secret for it. What a sad Consideration is it, that many of us have made our selves incapable of taking Solomon's excellent Coun-

Counsel. They that have already spent their Youth in *youthful Lusts*, they are not in a *Capacity* of remembring their Creator in the Daies of their Youth. All that such can do, is only, with an holy Shame, and Godly Sorrow, to remember in Confession before God that they have not remembered and what in due Time they ought to have remembered ; and to beg of God, that for Christ his sake he would not in Judgment remember their non-remembrance-; but that he would in Mercy remember them, though they han't as they ought remembred him.

But now *for such*, as have not as yet past the Daies of their Youth ; O let them prize, and presently improve these precious Daies and Hours ; O *γνώρι τιμὴν* (as the wise *Pittacus* once said) know Time, know this particular Time ; lose not, if possible, a Minute of it. It will be grievous to *possess the iniquities of your Youth* in your Old Age. *Job 13. 26.*

Now for your encouragement to redeem this Part of your Time, consider seriously these few Things ;

1. That the early Redemption of your youthful Daies, for the Honour, and Worship, and Service of God will be *very pleasing and acceptable to him*. God of old required that the *first ripe Fruits*, and the *First-born* should be dedicated to him : and his *Sacrafices* he would have to be *young* ; to shew that he delights in the Flower of Age, and well accepts the *kindnesses of our Youth Jer, 2. 2.* As in the distilling of Waters, that which is drawn off first, is the

the strongest, and fullest of Spirits ; and the last is the weakest and smallest : Or, as in the pouring out of a Bottle, or drawing out of a Vessel ( to use *Senaec's* Similitude, that which is purest and clearest comes forth first ; and that which is thickest and most dreggy, sinks and remains at the Bottom : so the best of our Daies run out first, and the worst at last. Now 'tis a *Disgrace to God*, to give him the *Devils leavings* : it is a *Contempt* cast upon God, to give the Devil the *Flower* of your Age, and him the *Bran*. Suppose a *Landlord* should come to his *Tenant*, and entreat him to set before him somewhat to eat ; and he should reply, Excuse me, I pray Sir ; there are a Company of *Villains and Varlets*, which I am at present providing for ; but if you will be pleased to stay a while, you shall have those *broken Scraps* which they shall leave : would not this be a strange, rude, unseemly Behaviour ? Thus, thus it is with the most of us, God is our great *Landlord*, and he comes, and moves, and solicits us to serve him : but we have fleshly filthy Lusts that war against our Souls ; and yet these must be straight provided for : they must have the Strength of our Bodies and of our Souls. This is unworthy, dishonourable Dealing with God, and we little think how ill he takes it at our hands. But how *welcom* are they to God, who *prefer God* before the Devil and the World ; and honour God with their very *first choice, and virgin Love* ! Who do not stay, as it were, till they are *weary* of Satan's Service, and then take a *new Master* ; but follow  
God



God even as soon as they can go, seek and enquire early after him, and bind themselves in their Youth to him; and keep close to him, and walk with him, when youthful lusts and passions do strongly encline, and violently draw, and pull and hale them another way; to break thorough all those difficulties by a prevailing affection to God and goodness, this surely is greatly acceptable, and highly pleasing and delightful to God.

2. The well-redeeming of your younger daies, as it will be most acceptable unto God, so 'twill make you *more useful and serviceable unto others*. Thou canst hardly do any *considerable Service* either to God, or the Church, or the State, if thou makest it *late* before thou *beginnest* to be well employed. He can do but a little Work, that takes none in hand till the Sun is a setting.

3. The redeeming and husbanding of the Time of thy Youth is apt to prove *most profitable to thy self*. The earlier Men set out in the Morning of their Age, the farther they may walk in the Waies of God's Commandments in the Day of their Life, and make more Progress in the Path of Holiness. The sooner you begin, the more Work you may do, and so may receive the greater Reward: yea, be *Gainers here*, as well as hereafter, by being thus busie betimes. He that makes Religion his Business in his Youth, may easily lay up a Stock of Grace, and of comfortable Experience, which may be of much use to him. If thou *beginnest young*, thou maiest get a bundance  
of

of Grace into thy Heart before thou art old : Thou maiest go from one Degree of Grace to another, from Strength to Strength : thou maiest be almost a *perfect Man in Christ Jesus*, by that Time others are but *new born Babes*, if thou wilt but begin betimes. But a *late Christian* cannot probably be an *eminent Christian* ; As a Man that begins the World late, can hardly grow a very rich Man : Or as we say of *Bees* that swarm late, they get not any great Store of Honey. *Manna* was not to be met with but in the *Morning* : *Exod. 16. 21.* Who would mispend, or neglect the Morning-Season of his Life, and lose that Portion of heavenly *Manna*, which he might have gathered and gotten in it? Who would have a *thin Crop*, and lean Harvest, by *latter sowing* his Seed? Sow early, that you may reap the more plentifully.

4. Consider moreover, that they that redeem the Time of their Youth, are *likly to redeem their riper Years* : They have not only *more Time* to get good, but a *greater Disposition*, and a stronger habitual Inclination to *be*, and to *do good*. *A young Saint, and an old Devil* ; is a cursed and absurd Proverb : There is the greatest fear that a *young Devil* will prove an *old Beelzebub*. Who can ever expect, that a Tree that is barren in the *Summer*, should bare and bring forth Fruit in the *Winter*? It is said of the *Trees of Righteousness*, that they shall *bring forth Fruit in old Age* : *Psal. 92. 14.* not then *begin* to do it, but shall *continue* still to do it. *It is good for a Man, that he bear the Yoke in his Youth* : *Lam. 3. 27* : It is true of the

Yoke of Christ; They that bear it in their Youth, there is hope they will count it an *easy Yoke*, and not offer to throw it off afterwards. *Train up a Child in the Way he should go; and when his old, he will not depart from it.* Prov. 22. 6. What the Vessel is first season'd withal, it will have taste of a long Time after. Remember God in your Youth, and you will hardly forget him ever after.

3. Consider once more, 'tis plain and evident *some young ones have redeem'd the Time of their Youth*: do you follow and imitate their Example. Holy David was able to say, *Thou art my Hope, O Lord God; thou art my Trust from my Youth.* Psal. 71. 5. Good Obadiab feared the Lord from his Youth. 1 Kings 18. 12. It is said of Abijah the Child of Jeroboam, that in him there was found some good Thing, some Seeds of true Piety toward the Lord God of Israel; that is, in regard of the Worship of God: and it is the Commendation of this young Man, that he was not only truly Godly, but pious and religious in a wicked and flagitious Jeroboam's House 1 Kings 14. 13. You know, Samuel in his Childhood ministr'd before the Lord. 1 Sam. 2. 18. And Timothy from a Child had known the holy Scriptures: 2 Tim. 3. 15. He began betime in Religion, in holy Learning and Knowledg; and gave such *Proofs* of forwardness therein, whence it might be, and was *prophesied* concerning him, 1 Tim. 1. 18. that he would become an eminent Instrument in the Church of God, in communicating to others the Light of saving Knowledge, wherein him-  
self

self so early had made so good a Beginning, so great a Progress.

We read of the elect Lady's Children *walking in Truth*; 2 John 4. that is, in Sincerity and Integrity of Faith and Manners, or ordering to their Actions *as the Truth prescribes*, and living according to the Rule of the Gospel. Our Saviour Christ was early about his Father's Business: we find him at it at twelve Years old. Luke 2. 42. 49. 'Tis said of that good King Josiah, that in the eighth Year of his Reign (which was the sixteenth Year of his Age) while he was yet young, he began to seek after God. Certainly his Heart was seasoned with the Fear of God in his Childhood, when first he began to reign: But now in his Youth, *as soon as he could get the Reins of Government in his Hand*, he began to seek after God: that is, to endeavour the Settling of the true Religion, and *publickly* to manifest his Faith in God, and Zeal for his Glory: And in the *twelfth Year* (when he had attained to more Authority) he began to act most vigorously against Idolatry: And in the eighteenth Year he had quite purged the Land, and the House of the Lord. 2 Chron. 34. 1, 2, 3, 8.

And it's well known concerning our *English Josiah*, King Edward the sixth, that he was most exemplarily holy in the Daies of his Youth. How did he honour the Bible, and Word of God! When one of his Play-fellows proffer'd him a bossed-plated Bible to stand upon, and heighten him to take down somewhat he desired, which then stood above his Reach; per-

at a Bible, with holy Indignation he refused it, and sharply reprov'd the Owner thereof, as accounting it unfit to *trample* that under his Feet, which he was to *treasure up* in his Head and Heart. And upon the Day that he was crowned King of *England*, when three Swords were offer'd him, to signify that he was King of three Kingdoms, *Engl. France, and Ireland*? he is reported to have said, There is one Sword wanting yet: and being asked what that was, he said it was the Bible: that Book is the Sword of the Spirit, said he, far to be prefer'd before all these. He was constant, fervent, and successful in his private Devotions. How did his faithful Prayer wonderfully recover Sr. *John Cheek* his School-master, who by his Physicians was quite given over for a dead Man? How did he promote and carry on the Reformation of Religion, from Idolatry and Superstition, in this Land and Nation! And when the Emperour *Charles the fifth* sent an Embassadour with a menacing Message of War, in case his Cousin the Lady *Mary* should not be admitted the free exercise of the Mass: and the Council thinking it fit to gratify the Emperour, engag'd Arch-Bishop *Cranmer*, and Bishop *Ridley* to press the King with Politick Reasons for the toleration thereof; the King refused upon Scripture Grounds to condescend thereunto: and when he found them still urgent, and very importunate with him; at last he silenced them with his Tears, and stopt their arguing with his weeping, and forc'd them to weep in company with him. It

is reported of the early and cmeinently holy Mr. *Joseph Aellin*, that, when but a School-Boy he was observed to be so studious, that he was known as much by this *Periphrasis* (*the Lad that will not play as by his Name*. And when in the University ; he so demeaned and carried himself, that he deserved to be called the *Scholar*, *who by his good Will would do nothing else but pray and study*. Yea so early, as about the *eleventh Year* of his Age, he was noted to be very diligent in private Praier, and so fixed in that Duty, that he would not be disturbed, or moved by the coming of any Person accidentally into the Places of his Retirement. And 'tis remarkable, what is storied of a young Child, who died about *five or six Years old*, that he would so beg, and expostulate, and weep in Praier, that sometimes it could not be kept from the Ears of Neighbours ; so that one of the next house was forced to cry out, *The Praiers and Tears of that Child in the next House will sink me to Hell* : because the forward Piety and Devotion of the Child, did reprove and condemn his neglect of Praier, or his slight Performance of it. And to what a Degree of good Understanding and Affection had that Child of Mr. *Owen* the Minister arrived ? who was but about *fourteen Years old* when he died : and in his Life time would often write very serious Godly Letters to his Brother, which shewed his great Piety, and happy improvement. And how favourily and spiritually he exercised himself in Meditation. notably appears in

this Instance ; that though he much delighted in *young Lambs*, yet one Day his Mother bringing a Lamb, newly fallen of an Ewe of his; and shewing a little Displeasure, that he should take no more notice of her bringing it to him : He told her, that *as he saw the Lamb in her Arms*, he was thinking of the Lamb of God, *how he presented him to the Father* : and that the Lamb his Mother brought him, was but a poor thing for him to rejoice, in, for he had far higher Matters for his Joy. Some young ones have redeemed the Time of their Youth ; O do you so too. Be able to say upon better Grounds than the young Man in the Gospel, that all God's Commands you have kept from your Youth up. The Time of Youth is a special Season of doing, and receiving good : That's the first.

*The second Particular Opportunity to be redeemed.*

2. As the Morning of our Age, so the Morning of the Week, the first Day of the Week, is a special Time to be redeem'd. Let this Day be religiously observed by us, which was applied, and consecrated, separated and appropriated to sacred Uses, and holy Offices, by the blessed Apostles ; who were either commanded by Christ to do it, when for forty Daies after his Resurrection he instructed the Apostles, and speaks to them of the Things pertaining to the Kingdom of God : Acts 1. 3. Or, having received the holy Ghost, Christ's Agent or Advocate, promised and sent to inspire their Minds, & to teach and shew them how to manage Affairs

Affairs, and order Matters relating to the Church ; were *extraordinary* guided, and *divinely directed* by the Spirit of Christ in this weighty Business : of the Surrogation and Substitution of the *first Day* in the place of the Jewish *seventh Day Sabbath*, which was partly a Ceremonial Rest, and was joined with the Ceremonial Law, the Services and Rites whereof were to be observed in the Tabernacle and Temple upon *this Day* and was a *distinguishing Sign*, and Part of that *Partition-wall* whereby the Jews were separated from the Gentiles and was therefore fit to be now removed and laid aside : And were moreover plainly lead to it by the *Providence of God*, which imprinted and put a most notable Character and signal Honour on this Day, and made it more excellent than any other, by Christ's Resurrection, and Apparitions, and the Spirit's Mission upon it; which were a remarkable pointing, and special singling out of this Time ; and a clear Intimation, that *this very Day* should be publickly kept, and universally observed, in perpetual Honour of the Lord Christ. As the Sacrament is called *ἡμεῖς κυριακὴν*, the Lord's Supper, not only because it is kept in Remembrance of the Lord's Death, till his coming again ; but because it was instituted by the Lord himself 1 Cor. 11. 20, 23, 26. So the first Day of the Week is expressly stiled *ἡμέρα κυριακή* the Lord's Day ; Revel. 1. 10. not only because it is observed by the Church in Memory of the Resurrection of the Lord Christ ; but because it was appointed by the Lord Christ, because he



was the *Author* and *Ordainer* of it, either *immediatly* by himself, or *mediatly* by his Apostles. And we cannot imagine, that there shall ever occur a *sufficient Reason* for the *Alteration* of this to any other day; for we can never look to receive a *richer Benefit* in this World than Redemption by Christ, who rose from the Dead; and Sanctification by the Spirit, sent down from Heaven on this very Day. We can never have *greater Blessings* to remember on another Day, and therefore the Sanctification of this Day must be *perpetuated* to the End of the World.

On *this Day* especially the Apostles performed those Offices, which are *most proper* and *most agreeable* to a *Sabbath-Day*. There was a Convention and Congregation of the Disciples on the *first Day of the Week*, to break Bread; and St. Paul preached to them the same Day: *Acts* 20. 7. And though the Apostles preached, and celebrated the Lord's Supper on *other Daies* of the Week; yet why are these Things mentioned as done on *that Day* particularly and remarkably, unless it were for some singular *Eminency* of *this* above any *other Day*; and because they were bound to do those Duties on *this Day* more than on any *other*. And the Apostle gave *Express Order*, that the *Collection for the Saints*, a Work especially fit for a *Sabbath-Day*, should be made particularly on the *first Day*. *1 Cor* 16. 1, 2. that is, *every first Day of the Week*; which was the *fore-ordain'd* and customary Day of the Christian, religious, Church Assemblies. Upon (or against) the first Day

Day of the Week, every Person was to lay a part what God should move and encline him to offer.

The *Preparation* and *Separation* of it was to be at home, every Week : but the *Collation* and *Contribution* to be in the *Publick Congregation*, every *Lord's Day*. For it was not reasonable for any to come to the Lord empty, *Deut. 16. 16.* upon the Day of the most solemn Christian Assembly. And *this Day* was appointed for the Oblation of their *Alms*, because of the *inestimable Benefits*, and infinite good Things we *this Day* had bestowed upon us.

And the *Church of Christ* has constantly observ'd this high Day, ever since the Apostles Daies; and spent it in Reading, Exhortation, Praier, Sacraments. The Primitive Christians were suspected to worship the *Sun*, because they used to celebrate the *Sunday*. It was an usuall Question put of old by the Heathen to the Christians, before ever they offered to torture and martyr them? *Num Dominicum servasti?* Did you keep the Lord's-Day? To which they answer'd, *Ghristianus sum, intermittere non possum.* I am a Christian, and dare not omit, or give over the Observation of it.

*This is a Day*, in which God is to be solemnly worshipped and served; and Christ to be publickly magnified and glorified: A *special Season* to be laid hold on; a particular Opportunity to be improved for our *Soul's Good*. This a *special Day of Grace*, in which (as I may say) the *Mint* is going, and in which we may take our *Stamp of Holiness*. This is the *gain-*

fullest, the joyfulest Day of the Week : a Day of Harvest, wherein we are to lay up in store for the whole Week, nay, for our whole Lives. This is a Market-day for our Souls, in which we may trade for Eternity. This is a Day in which we may hear and understand the Things that belong unto our Peace. Pious and pathetical is that of the divine and holy Mr. Herbert,

( Sunday. )

O Day most calm, most bright,  
The Week were dark, but for thy Light :  
Thy Torch doth show the Way.

( Sundaies )

They are the fruitful Beds and Borders  
In God's rich Garden : that is bare,  
Which parts their Ranks and Orders  
On Sunday Heaven's Gate stands ope ;  
Blessings are plentiful and rise,  
More plentiful than Hope.

This is a Day, in which the most precious Commodities that ever the World saw, or heard of, are set forth : in which the Riches and Treasures of the Gospel are opened, Christ himself offered, his Merit and Spirit rendered ; Pardon and Grace, Life, Strength and Comfort held out exhibited. This is a Day, in which no Pandora's Box is opened, but in which the Cabinet of God's Jewels is unlocked, and his precious Gifts and Graces dispensed. This is a Day, in which a spiritual Mart, a divine Fair is publicly kept : in which, with the

the *wise Virgins*, we may buy *Oil* for our Lamps; buy spiritual *Eye-salve*, to anoint our Eyes, that we may see ( as our Saviour counsels excellently ); buy the *Truth* ( as the wise Man advises us ) and be perswaded so well to like it, as never to sell or part with it : buy *Wine, and Milk, and Bread*, to fill and satisfy our empty, hungry, and thirsty Souls : buy *white Raiment*, that we may be clothed, and that the Shame of our Nakedness may not appear : buy the Christian's *compleat Armour*, that we be furnished for our Warfare, and well provided against the Assaults of our Spiritual Enemies : buy *Gold tried in the Fire*, that we may be rich : yea, in which we may buy the *Pearl* of Price ; in which we may receive and lay hold on Christ, and all his Benefits ; and embrace and apply the great and precious Promises of the Gospel. *This is a Day*, in which the *Word* of God's Grace is opened and applied ; and the holy *Sacraments*, the Seals of the Covenant, frequently administred ; in which we have the Priviledg of hearing God speaking unto Sinners, and woining and beseeching Rebels to be reconciled : and in which we may enjoy the glorious Liberty of speaking our selves to God, with an holy Boldness at the Throne of Grace ; and pouring out with one Accord our Supplication and Souls in Praier to him. *This is a Day* of solemn Rest from servile Offices, and worldly Works : A Time of drawing nigh to God, and of meeting the Lord in his own Ordinances ; of joining with the Saints and Servants of God, and

and the Praises of him : of having Communion and Fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, through the blessed Spirit ; and of enjoying a kind of Heaven here upon Earth.

The *Lords Day*, you see, is a special Season of Grace and Mercy : O let's be spiritually *thrifty* of this Opportunity : Let's not live as if we were of the same Mind with the modern carnal Jews, who think (as the learned *Buxtorf* tells us) that *sleeping excessively on their Sabbath is a great Honour done to God*.

Let's not content our selves with an idle Rest : Let our Rest be the Rest of *Men*, and not of *Beasts* ; and the Rest of *holy Men*, as *holy* : Let's not only cease from secular works, but exercise our rational and spiritual Faculties in heavenly and divine Employments ; and set our selves to Works of Piety, Charity and Mercy. Let us redeem this Time out of the Hands of *the Devil*, the *World*, and our own carnal, cozening, corrupt *Hearts*. Do not offer to work the Works of your *Calling*, the Works of the *Flesh*, the Works of the *Devil*, on the *Lords Day* : Take heed of serving the *Devil* more upon the *Lords Day*, than on any other Day, than on all the Days of the Week besides. Let not the *Lords Day* be *leisure* for the *Devil* ; as if the first Day of the Week were *Demoniacus potius quam Dominicus* ; the *Devils* and not the *Lords Day*. Let not any *Temptations*, or *Delusions* of *Satan*, keep and detain us from the publick Ordinance, divert our attention at it, and hinder our Spiritual Benefit by

by it. Let not any *Recreations*, and sensual Pleasures, upon this Day especially, hinder the performance of Family-Duties, and private religious Exercises. Let not *vain Thoughts* this Day lodge within us, and juttle out heavenly Meditations. Let not worldly *impertinent Discourses*, upon this Day, shut out more profitable Christian Conferences.

The Lord's Day, it is the most considerable Advantage, the most notable Opportunity that is afforded us, and the *best Price* that is put into our Hands all the Week long, You have several Market-daies in the Week, for civil Affairs, and worldly Interests: but you have this one only for spiritual and eternal Interests and Advantage. O do not neglect so great Salvation as is this Day offered and tendred to you, Having such an excellent Price in your Hands, O be not such Fools as not to make a good and a right Use of it. Mr. Richard Capel, pressing the strict Observation of the Lord's Day, would usually say, *that we should go to sleep that Night with Meat in our Mouths, (as it were):* The Lord's-day being our best Opportunity; if we mis-spend that, we can nor be said to redeem the Time.

Now that we may redeem the Lord's-day to good Effects, and useful Purposes, let us not be wanting to put our selves in a *fit Preparation* for the due Observation of it: not only by previous Meditation of the Day, and the Duties of it; but by ordering aright the constant course of our Conversation, and labouring for habitual Sanctification. Let us every

every Day *live as those* that expect to have Communion with God, the next Lord's day. Let us act so regularly all the Week, that nothing may be done by us, which may breed any strangeness between God and us, and hinder our delightful Converse with him on his own Day : that on that sacred, separated Day, we may not bring the fresh Guilt of any gross and wilful Sin along with us, which may make us blush and be ashamed to come into his Presence. Let us walk so circumspectly every Day, that upon the Return of his own Day, we may meet him with a pure and clear Conscience, with clean Hands, and clean Hearts, and may be made *joyful in his House of Praier*. That we may keep the Lords-day holy, let us strive and study to live holily all the Week ; and be so provident and diligent, as to finish and dispatch in the six Daies all kinds of secular Works, and common Employments ; that no *Sin* committed on the one hand, nor any *Business* of our Calling omitted on the other, may disturb and slacken our Attention, distract and discompose us in the Exercise of our Devotion ; but that we may cheerfully and fruitfully spend the *Lord's-day* in the *Lord's Work*. Let us every Day carry our selves so spiritually, and perform our Closet and Family religious Duties so conscionably and constantly ; that we may be the fitter and readier to spend this choice, select Day in the solemn Worship and Service of God ; and may go through the several Duties of it with less Tedioufness, and more Delight. Let us be  
with

with God some part of every Day, that so we may grow into acquaintance with him ; and may taste the Sweetness, and experience the Gainfulness of Communion with him ; and long for the return of the Lord's-day, that we may meet and enjoy him in the publick Ordinances, and have Opportunity of larger and freer Converse with him. Let us *pray* to God every Day, that so, by using our selves to the Duty, we may be the better disposed to join in Praier with the Congregation on the Lords-day. Let us *read* the Bible every Day, and *daily do* whatever we know to be our Duty ; and this will make us more apt to hear, and the better prepared to receive the Word that is preached on the Lord's-day.

And when the *Lord's-day* comes, let us get up as *early* as may be, that so we may have the more Time before us to work the Work of God in : And take some Pains to prepare our selves in *private*, for our better attendance upon the *publick* Ordinances ; and *timely* resort to the place of publick Meeting ; Follow the Counsel of holy Mr. Herbert ;

*Sundaies observe : think, when the Bells do  
chime,*

*'Tis Angels Musick ; therefore come not late.*

*God then deals Blessings : if a King did so,*

*Who would not haste, nay give, to see the Show ?*

— O be drest :

*Stay not for th'other Pin : why thou hast lost*

*A Joy for it worth Worlds, Thus Hell doth jest*

*Away*



*Away thy Blessings, and extreemly flout thee;  
Thy Clothes being fast, but thy Soul loose about  
thee.*

And when thou art come into the Church,  
watch over thy Behaviour there : *make thy  
self all Reverence and Fear.* Open thy Ears ;  
but shut thy Eies to all distracting Objects.

*Who marks in Church-time others Symmetry,  
Makes all their Beauty his Deformity.*

As the same Divine Poet pathetically expresses it.

Let God and Angels see your most devout Behaviour, and serious Composure, the whole Time of Praier : And give all diligent close attention to the Word of God, read and preach'd. Do not carp and catch, jest and jeer at the Preachers Language or Expression. Do not shew by your vain and prophane Carriage, your ridiculous Gestures, and unseemly Actions, your Laughing and Whispering, Toying and Talking, that you slight and contemn the Foolishness of Preaching.

And when, on the Lords-day the Lords Table is richly furnish'd with a spiritual Banquet, make not needles and frivolous Excuses to absent your selves from this Marriage-feast. If any croud in, that have not a Wedding Garment ; let not this make you stay out, that have one. Lose not your Portion of this heavenly Food, because of others impreviation. Though others eat and drink their own Damnation, let your

your Faith feed on Christ to your own Salvation. By your frequent receiving of this Sacrament, shew your real Sense of your own need of it, your high prizing and valuation of it, your hearty Thankfulness to Christ for it, your Obedience to your Lord, who does not only vouchsafe it as a Priviledge, but command it as a Duty: *Do this in Remembrance of me.* Perform this easie sweet Command of thy dying Lord and Saviour, who has freed and delivered thee by his Death from the heavy Yoke and grievous Bondage of Jewish Sacrifices and Observances. O let our Hearts, at such a Time, be broken and bleed at the Remembrance of our Sins, which brake Christs Body, and shed his Blood. Behold in the Sacrifice and bloody Death of Christ, represented in this Sacrament, the odiousness and baseness of your own Sins: and resolve to be the Death of that, which was the Death of Christ; and rather to die, than willingly to do that for which Christ died. Abhor the Thoughts of wilfully choosing so great an Evil, as once brought so great a Punishment upon so great a Person as the holy Jesus, the well-beloved Son of God. Consider seriously upon this Occasion, that if God would not spare Christ, when he, who knew no Sin, was, by voluntary, charitable assumption of our Guilt, to answer for our Sins; to be sure then he will not spare us, if we wilfully run on in Sin, and obstinately allow our selves therein, notwithstanding so convincing a Demonstration of his sin-hating Holiness and vindictive Justice. Upon due Meditation draw

draw this Conclusion, (which is the excellent Reasoning of the Learned Grotius) that if God would not pardon the Sins, no not of penitent persons, unless Christ did substitute himself in their Room, and stand in their stead, to bear the Punishment; much less will he suffer unreclaimable Rebels, and contumacious Sinners to go unpunished.

When Christ is set forth, in this Sacrament, crucified before your Eyes; think, how he intended and aimed at our Mortification and Sanctification, in his Death and Passion: Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar People, zealous of good Works: Tit. 2. 14. Who his own self bore our Sins in his own Body on the Tree; that we, being dead to Sin, should live unto Righteousness. 1 Pet. 2. 4. Let us yield, that Christ should have his End in his Death; and never allow our selves to live in Sin, which will render us incapable of receiving the Benefit of Christs Death. Think, how the Unholiness of our Lives is a greater wrong to Christ, than the Jews being the very Death of him: because (as the learned Dr. Jackson notes) it is more against the Will, and Liking, and good Pleasure of our Saviour; whose Will was regulated by Reason, and was a constant Rule of Goodness: for, though a painful, shameful Death, and that inflicted by his own People, went much against his human Will; yet he chose rather to die, and to suffer the most afflictive Circumstances of Death for us, than to suffer us to live and die in our Sins, and in the Servitude and Power of Satan.

Shall

Shall we pretend, when we approach to the Table of our Lord, affectionately to remember a loving dying Saviour, and to desire to have his Memory continued and transmitted to Posterity; and yet so much forget him, upon the return of any Temptation, as to repeat that which was the Death of him? Shall we weep at the Sacrament, and seem to be hugely troubled for those Sins which were the Cause of Christs Sorrows; and yet go about again to destroy, and to crucifie Christ afresh? Shall we commemorate at the Lords Supper our wonderful Redemption by the precious Blood of Christ; and when we have done, shall we do the Devil more work and service than the Lord Christ? O what a Reproach is this to Christ, and what a Sport to the Devil, that they, that pretend to remember Christs Dying for them, should not find in their hearts to live to him! St. Cyprian brings in the Devil boasting and bragging against our Saviour, and insulting over us silly and sinful Wretches, in this manner; *I have endured no Bufferings, nor borne Smitings with the Palms of Mens Hands: I have suffered no Seourgings, nor under-gone the Cross for any of these: nor have I redeem'd my Family with the Price of my Passion and Blood-shedding: yet shew me, O Christ, so many, so busy, so painful, so dutiful Servants of thine, as I am able to shew thee every where of mine.* Bring forth, if thou canst, such a Number of Persons, who devote themselves, and give their Labours, Estates and Time to thee: as I can easily produce of those, who do all this to me.

When

When thou professest to remember that Christ died for thee, *O die to that* for which he died: Offer thy self *to him*, and lay out thy self *for him*, who once offered himself *for us*, and in the Sacrament offers himself *to us*. Think no Duty too much for him: For Shame, for Shame, do not serve any longer a bloody Murderer, instead of a blessed Saviour and merciful Redeemer.

Let our Thoughts and Meditations dwell upon the *Demonstration*, given us in the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, of Christs exceeding, *incomparable Love to Mankind*. See there, how contrary the sweet and kind Nature of Christ is, to the cruel and execrable Nature of the old Tyrant, the Devil: For (as the learned Dr. More very well observes) *whereas the Devil (who by unjust Usurpation had got the Government of the World into his own hands, tyrannizing with the greatest Cruelty and Scorn, that can be imagined over Mankind) thirsted after humane Blood, and in most Parts of the World required the Sacrificing of Men; which could not arise from any thing else but a salvage Pride, and Despight against us: This new gracious Prince of Gods own appointing, Christ Jesus, was so far from requiring any such villainous Homage, that himself became at once one grand and allsufficient Sacrifice for us, to expiate the Sins of all Mankind, and so to reconcile the World to God. Shall not all this disengage us from Sin and Satan, and win and gain us over to Christ?*

And let Christs Death make thee study to do something answerable to the dearest Love

of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has dealt so graciously with thee, as to transfer the Punishment from thee upon his Son; and so bountifully with thee, as to give his own Son for thee, and to thee. O blest and praise God, by studying to do such good Works, as may provoke others to blest and glorify him.

And when you come home from the publick Ordinance, take heed you do not entangle your selves with *Businesses, or Recreations*; which have as much Power to render the publick Duties ineffectual, *after, as before* their performance: But carefully spend that which is not Church-time, in Meditation, Praier, Reading, savoury Speeches, heavenly Discourses, and the conscionable performance of such Duties as tend to your own and others Edification.

*Let Magistrates redeem the Lords day*, by personally frequenting, open owning and countenancing the publick Worship of God, and Ordinances of Christ; and by improving the utmost of their Power for the Glory of God, and Honour of Religion, in the zealous prevention, or speedy Reformation of the horrid Profanation of the Lords-day; and vigorous promoting the general Sanctification of it; out of serious consideration, and a strong conviction, that the *Preservation and Continuance of Religion* doth much depend upon the due Observation of the Lords-day: And that a Disesteem, and Neglect of the Sanctification of that Day, does quickly cause a lamentable Decay of *Christian Piety*, and hasten the infliction of fearful  
*Judgments*

*Judgments upon a Land and Nation.*

Let them do this, in imitation of the brave and holy-spirited *Nebemiah*, who testified against, and contended with the notorious *Profaners* and Violators of the *Sabbath-day*; and would not suffer the open selling of *Victuals* and *Wares*; the trading with *Commodities*, and carrying of *Burthens*, and doing the *servile Works* of their ordinary Callings on that Day. *Did not your Fathers thus*, saies he; *and did not our God bring all this Evil upon us, and upon this City? yet ye bring more Wrath upon Israel by profaning the Sabbath.* [See *Nehem.* 13. from 15. to 22.]

Let *Magistrates* see to the Observation, and look to the Sanctification of this Day; and so become the *happy Instruments*, and *blessed Means* of the subsisting and flourishing of Religion in the World; of keeping up in the Minds and Hearts of Men a Sense of God, a Sense of Sin, a Sense of Duty to God and Man, a Sense, or believing apprehension of a certain Reward or Punishment, a Sense of Heaven and Hell, a Sense of Eternity: of begetting and preserving a *Tenderness* and *Quickness* in Mens Consciences, which are apt to be roused and awakened under every Ordinance: of maintaining the Life of Religion and the Power of Godliness: of upholding the *outward Worship* and Service of God, and heightning and increasing the *inward Honour*, and hearty Love and Fear of him: *All which depend*, in a great measure, upon *Magistrates* securing, what lies in them, the due and sacred Observation of the *Lords-Day*.

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*Let Ministers redeem the Lords day ; not by composing their Sermons, or committing them to their Memories on that Day, (which Toil and Task is fitter to be the Labour of other Daies) but by striving to work their Sermons and Discourses upon their own and others Hearts and Consciences. Let them spend that Day in wrestling with God in secret, for Assistance in, and a Blessing upon their publick-Employment : In first confessing their own sins in their private Closets ; and in begging divine Gifts and Graces, to make them able Ministers of the New Testament ; in setting right their aims and ends in all their Exercises and Undertakings ; and in imploring the special, spiritual, gracious, powerful Pretence of God with his own Ordinances. And then in humbly confessing the Sins of the People in the publick Congregation, in earnestly praying for their Souls, and praising God for his wonderful Mercies in the Mediator, for the happy Restauration of sinful and miserable Mankind, and the Communications of himself to the lost World by Jesus Christ : In propounding and pressing the most sound and solid Reasons ; the most convincing, cogent Arguments, to engage them to their Duties ; and in giving with the greatest Expression of Affection, the most proper Directions, and seasonable Counsels, to guide them in the Way to Heaven.*

*And. Let the People redeem the Lords-day, by privately reading, or hearing read, some Part and Portion of Scripture, which would season their Hearts, and make them more teachable, when they*



they hear the Word publickly read or preacht: By *praying for themselves* to the Shepherd and Bishop of their Souls; and by *praying for their Minister* to the chief Shepherd, that Shepherd both of Shepherd and Sheep, of Pastor and People, that great Prophet and Teacher of his Church; that he would teach their Teacher, instruct their Instructor, and so lead and guide him by his Word and Spirit; that he may safely conduct them by sound and seasonable Doctrine, and winning Example, in the Way everlasting. Yea, let them redeem the Lords-day, by attending on the Lord without Distractions; by joining in the *publick Prayers*; by being present at *publick Baptism*, that they themselves may be *minded* and remembered of their *own* Baptismal Vow and Covenant: By worthy and frequent receiving the *holy Communion* of the Body and Blood of Christ; By diligent hearing the Word preacht; By serious Meditation on it, and conscionable Practice of it; and by charging themselves, and humbly desiring God to help them, to walk worthy continually of the Means, Mercies and Priviledges they enjoy: By maintaining heart-warming conference; By charitable Visitation of, and Ministration of seasonable, suitable Counsel and Comfort to any sick and weak, afflicted or distressed Persons: By acknowledging all their Offences to God, and Amendment of the same; and by endeavouring heartily to reconcile themselves charitably to their Neighbours, where any Difference or Displeasure has been.

*You that are Masters and Governours of Families, redeem the Lords-day for your selves, and cause your Families to redeem it. The Lord of the Sabbath commandeth, that thou, and thy Son, and thy Daughter, thy Man-servant, thy Maid-servant, and all within thy Gate, keep that Day holy. Set not, suffer not your Servants to work, nor your Children or Servants to play on this Day. Be as much ashamed to see your Child or Servant steal and take Gods Time to themselves, as you would be to find them pilfering or stealing from your Neighbour. You can keep your Servants close to your own work all the Week-daies : See that they neglect not the Work of God on the Lords-day. Will you make them labour for you six Daies together, and will not you cause them to serve God one Day in seven ? Be at least as much concern'd in case of neglect of Gods Service, as you are at any Time when your own Work and Family-busines is neglected. Do it for Gods sake : Shew that you love the Honour of God, and not only respect your own Commodity, and look to your own Advantage. Do it for your Servants sake : Make it their Business to do God Service, that they may be approved and rewarded by him. Yea, do it for your own sake, Make your Servants Gods faithful Servants, that so they may prove more faithful to you ; and that God may bleis them in your Service ; and that your Work may thrive and succeed in their Hands. On this Day especially, call thy Family, thy whole Family to Family-duties : prepare them for, and haiten them to*

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the *publick Ordinances*. It is reported of Dr. Chaderton, the first Master of *Emmanuel-Colledge*, that he was married *three and fifty Years*, and yet in all that Time he never kept any of his Servants from the Church, to dress his Meat ; saying, *That he desired as much to have his Servants know God, as himself.* And it was the Custom of the Reverend and Pious Dr. Gouge, to forbear providing of Suppers the Eve before, that Servants might not be occasioned thereby to sit up late : neither would he suffer any Servant to stay at home for dressing any Meat upon the Lords-day, for the Entertainment of Friends, whether they were mean or great, few or many. Take your Family to Church along with you ; and when you return home again, examine, catechize, inform, instruct them, recapitulate the Sermon, read the Scripture and good Books to them, what practical, profitable, necessary, saving Truths on them ; sing Psalms among them, and pray most heartily and affectionately with and for them.

And you that are Servants, who have little leisure, most of you, on other Daies ; and who live, too many of you, in such profane and ungodly Families, where you hear not so much as one Prayer put up to God, nor one Line of the Word of God read, nor one serious Word spoken of God all the Week long : what reason have you carefully to redeem the Lords-day ? To redeem it in publick, by devoutly attending to the Prayers that are made, and the Word that is both read and preacht in the publick Congregation :

gregation : And to *redeem it in private*, by taking all possible Occasions to retire and go aside by your selves, to consider in secret the needs of your Souls, to examine your Hearts and States, to review your Lives and Actions, to humble your selves in Confession of Sin, and to pour out your Souls in Prayer for Pardon and Grace ; to read the Bible, and some instructive, practical Writings of the most judicious, experimental Divines ; apt to inform your Judgments, and to work and prevail upon your Affections : to set your selves to meditate of God, to draw out and engage your Hearts to God ; rather than to lavish out, and throw away those *precious Hours*, in foolish Talk, and frothy Discourse ; or in gadding abroad, and walking idly in the Fields, and recreating your Bodies rather than your Souls, and in thrusting God, and turning Religion wholly out of your Minds and Hearts, and nourishing your selves in Ignorance of God, and Unacquaintance with him, and in Encreasing the Atheism of your Hearts and Lives, and hardening your own and others Hearts, through the ensnarements of the World, and the deceitfulness of Sin.

But, it may be, you will say, you are *hard wrought all the Week long* ; and you have reason to take your *ease and pleasure*, and to rest and recreate your tired Bodies *one Day in seven*, that so you may endure your Labour, and go through all your Work the *better*.

I answer ; that your very *Cessation* in any measure from your wonted Labour, is an ease

and relief to your weary Bodies: and that the very *change* of your Work and Occupation from secular servile employment to spiritual divine Worship and Service; and the *Diversion* of your Minds from worldly Businesses to the Offices and Exercises of Religion (if you would but acquaint your selves with them, and use your selves to them) would be delightful and refreshing to you: And the *Peace and Quiet*, Joy and Comfort of a good Conscience, in the faithful Discharge of your Duty to God, and a tender care of your immortal Souls, would *strengthen and hearten* you to bear all the Burthen of the hardest Labours of your domestick Ministeries; in consideration, that your Heavenly Father, Lord and Master, will *accept and reward* your Works of Piety, and *bleß and prosper* the Works of your Hands, in the Household-businesses, and Family-employments, incumbent on you, and belonging to you. Rather *break your Sleep*, to rise the earlier, than lose the Opportunities of that Day: Or, *chuse to leave*, and live out of those Families, in the which you are forced to live without God, are debarr'd from his Service, and can have no Liberty allowed you to mind God and your Souls, on a Day that was *purposely ordained* and appointed for your spiritual proficiency and improvement.

*Let the Poor of this World redeem this Day*, by taking this Opportunity to labour spiritually for the *Meat which perisheth not, but endureth to everlasting Life*; and by hearing the Gospel preach'd in this Season to them, to become  
rich

*rich in Faith, rich in Grace ; to know, and to partake of the Grace and Favour, the Love and Kindness of our Lord Jesus Christ ; who, though he was rich, yet, for our sakes became poor, that we through his Poverty might be made rich. You that are poor, and mean, and low in the World, and who cannot take so much Time as others to worship and enjoy God on the Week-Daies, see that you well improve this Day. Now you are released from secular Businesses and common Services, and your Bodies rest from their hard Labours ; be sure that you spiritually busie, and holily employ your selves in the Service of God.*

*Let me likewise charge them that are rich in this World, to redeem this choicest part of their Time ; and in it to endeavour to be rich toward God, rich in God ; to lay up for themselves a Treasure in Heaven : to obtain the true, certain, durable Riches ; which, when they fail, will never leave them ; but when they remove, will bear them company into the other World.*

*And here let me hint to you of the Gentry, what Dr. Paul Micklewait once urged and pressed in a Sermon at the Temple ; that Gentle-folk, of all People, are obliged to a strict observation of the Lords-day. The Gentry, in comparison, rest all the Week long : their Cheeks are not moistened with Sweat ; their Hands are not hardened with hard Labour ; they are not tired and wearied out with pains-taking : They who take their pleasure, and recreate themselves every Day in the Week, have nothing to*

plead for Recreations on the Lords-day. Tho', for my own part, I should be far from indulging a Liberty to any, to take such Recreations as hinder the Devotions due to any part of the Lords-day, and are Impediments to the Sanctification of it aright. Let all industriously redeem the Lords-day.

And take we heed we redeem it not by halves: but let's religiously observe, and covetously redeem the whole Lords-day.

We are bound in justice to God to do it: because God has set a Day, not a piece of a Day, apart for himself, and requires this Portion and Tribute of Time to be paid to him, who has graciously given us all our Time. We should be as much, yea more afraid, to steal Gods Time, than Mens Goods. Do not only observe the former part of the Day, repairing to the Church or Chappel in the Morning, but commonly and customarily absenting yourselves, and growing quite weary of any such Duty in the Afternoon: for God has allotted and appointed a seventh Part of our Time for his own Worship and Service: but if you keep only one half of the Lords-day, you give God but a fourteenth Part of your Time: Nay, of one Day in seven, I fear, too many spare him no more, than that Time only, which their Morning-Attendance takes up in publick on the Lords-day. And here I appeal to their own Reason, whether it be a meet and fit Thing, that rational Persons, created by God, and redeemed by his Son, should afford to the Worship and Service of God and Christ, and the great

great concerns of their immortal Souls, but *two Hours at most* of the whole Lords-day; and it may be *no more* of the whole *Week*) and shall spend those Hours in a *formal*, customary, cold and heartless Worship of an infinitely holy and just Deity, the tremendous, impartial Judg of Angels and Men.

Grudge not to give God *one whole Day in seven*, who largely and liberally grants and allows *six whole Daies in seven* to you: and who *designs a greater Benefit* and Advantage to you by your Observation of this *one Day*, than possibly can accrue to you by the carefullest and painfullest worldly Improvement of *all the rest*. O believe, and consider, that the *taking out of this one Day*, and setting it apart for such an excellent Service, and high Employment as you are called to in it, is certainly the *greatest Gift of all*. How can you be loth to spend *one Day in seven* in Familiarity with Heaven, in communion with your Maker, and Fellowship with your Saviour? Let us all call the Christian Sabbath, the Lords-day, *a Delight*: Take as much Contentment and Satisfaction in doing on this Day the Exercises of *Religion*, as Men usually take in doing the Works of their ordinary *Calling*: Take as much pleasure in *Gods Service*, as others take in *Sin and Vanity*. Let us spend the Lords-day, as *becomes* those, who *profess* that they love God *better*, and delight in him *more* than in any Thing in the World: Spend it as they that are *glad* of so honourable, and profitable, and pleasurable an Employment, as the publick and private Worshipping



of God. Let us go to the House of God with Joy. Let the Church, on the Lords-day, be a *Banqueting-house*, and not a *Prison* to us. Do but bring your selves to spend the Lords-day with *Delight*, and then you will keep it *to the End* of it.

The *Jews* were bound to keep a *whole Day* holy, in a grateful Memory of the *lesser Benefits* of the Creation, and their Deliverance out of *Ægypt*: And shall not we solemnly observe the *whole Lords-day*, in a thankful remembrance of *greater Blessings*? Not only of the Goodness of God in our Creation, but of his Grace and Mercy in our Redemption, and Deliverance from Hell, and Death eternal. We have *greater Engagements* to do it, than they: not only *greater Motives*, but *greater Means* too. We have greater variety of publick exercises on the Lords-day, than they had on their Sabbath: We have more Scripture to read in private than they had: We have the Old and New Testament; many *Expositors* upon them; many good *Practical Theological Treatises* written: We have *more Knowledge* afforded us than they had; *more Grace* offer'd us to do the Duties incumbent on us: Now we that have *more Means and Helps*, how can we offer to put God off with *less Duty*, and smaller Service, and shorter Performance?

Nay the very *Heathens*, guided by the light of Nature, held it reasonable, that the Daies consecrated to their Gods, should be devoutly, and *totally* observed with Rest and Sanctity. *Macrobius* tells us, that, on their holy Daies,  
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the People came together to spend the *whole Day* in learning *Fables*, to be conferred upon. And will you, that call your selves Christians, refuse to come together on the Lords-day, to spend one Hour in the Morning, another in the Afternoon, in learning the *Mysteries* of the Gospel, and in receiving saving Instructions out of the Word of God?

You that give your *Bodies* two Meals every Day, will you feed your *Souls* but once on the Lords-day? Give me leave to deal with you in the winning Words of that sweet Singer of our Israel: Speaking of the Lords day, saies he;

*Twice on the Day his due is understood;  
For all the Week thy Food so oft he gave thee.  
Thy cheer is mended; bate not of the Food,  
Because 'tis better, and perhaps may save thee.  
Thwart not th' Almighty God: O be not cross.  
Fast when thou wilt, but then, 'tis gain, not loss.*

Consider, that *your own, and your Families* spiritual Necessities do require and call for a most strict Observation of the *whole* Lords-day, and a faithful Improvement of all the Helps and Advantages of it. The *Works* of your Callings, and your Worldly Occasions and Employments, do, in a manner, take up *six Daies* of the Week; and you have but *one whole Day* in *seven* to provide for the Needs of your *immortal Souls*: Now the Necessities of your *Souls* are far greater than those of your *Bodies*; your *spiritual, eternal Estate*, is of nearer and higher

concern than your *outward and temporal* estate: And will you not labour then to improve every *Hour*, and endeavour to redeem every *Minute* of this *one Day*? Do but seriously think with your selves, *how much work* you have to do in this *one Day*; and then tell me, whether in *Reason and Prudence* you can spare any *Part* of it, yea or no. What have you to do for God, for your selves? What for your Families, for your Children, and Servants? How many and great *Mercies* of God, towards you, and yours, and all Mankind, are you bound to recount, and to be affected with on *this Day*? Ought you not still, on *this Day*, to remember and consider, and solemnly and heartily to bless God and Christ, for the *capital Mercies* of Creation, and Redemption, and for the gracious seasonable sending of the Holy Ghost; and to spend some *Time* in speaking highly and honourably of these Benefits, to the Praise of your Maker, and Glory of your Redeemer? Are not you *ignorant* of many Things, in which you ought to be informed? And have not you need then to spend some part of the Lords-day in reading the Bible, and some select Books of sound Divinity: in hearing the Word preach'd, and in conference with godly, understanding, and well-experienced Christians? Are you not too great *Strangers* to God, and your selves? And have not you need then to improve some portion of this Season in Meditation and Self-examination, that you may get more *Acquaintance* with God, and your own Hearts? Have not you the *Sin*

of the whole Week past to confes to God in secret, and to beg the pardon of every Lords-day ? when you have *leisure* from your bodily labour, is it not fit you should take some *pains* in conquering the Corruptions, and mortifying the lusts of your own Hearts, and in wrestling with God in Praier for his Strength and Grace ? Can you *idle* away your Time, and take your pleasure on the Lords-day, when you have *Families* to inform, and Children and Servants to catechize and instruct ? Let your *Consciences* tell me, whether it be *better*, on the Lords-day, to spend your Time in unnecessary Divertisements, in fruitless Visitations, in vain and frothy Discourses ; to talk freely together of worldly Busineses ; to judg the Preacher, to censure your Christian Neighbour : Or to commune with your selves, and to labour to edifie your own Families : To teach your Children the Doctrine of *Adams* Fall, and of the Redemption wrought by Christ : To acquaint them, what Sin and Corruption they brought with them into the World ; and how they have encreased it since they came into the World : That the *Wages of Sin is death* : To tell them what Christ has done and suffered, to free and deliver them from Sin and Death ; and what they must do, to be capable of partaking of Christs saving Benefits : To ground your Servants in the Principles of Religion : To take account what they remember of the Sermons they heard that Day, and to examine how they have profited by the publick Ordinances. You see what a  
great

great deal of *Work* you have to do, and what a little *Time* you have to do it in : You have but *one whole Day in seven* : It concerns you then to be very *saving* of this *whole Day* : To be as far from disputing, whether it be not *lawful* to use Recreations and Sports on some part of it, or to employ some Hours of it in any unnecessary worldly *Businesses* ; as from putting the Question, Whether it be not *lawful* vainly to spill your own Blood ; or to make a refusal of Gold that is offer'd you, and to cast it contemptuously into the Dirt.

'Twill but little avail you, to make the utmost *worldly* Advantage of all the other six *Daies*, if you make not a sufficient *spiritual* Improvement of this, which is *more* considerable than all the rest. What would it profit you, if, as God *made the World* in six *Daies* ; so, you could *gain the whole World*, by working hard the *six Daies* ; if, by gross neglect of the *Lords day*, you at last *lose your own Souls* ?

The Church of England, in her pious and useful *Homily of the Time and Place of Prayer*, declares, that in the fourth *Commandment* God has given express Charge, that his obedient People should use *our Sabbath-day* (which is now our *Sunday*) holily ; and rest from their common and daily *Businesses* ; and also give themselves *wholly* to Heavenly Exercises of Gods true Religion and Service.

And in his *Majesties Royal Proclamation* for the Observation of the *Lords-day*, all his *Majesties* Subjects are bid to take notice, that, by the

the *Law*, the resorting to Divine Service, enjoined on that Day, does comprehend the *entire Day*, and *entire Service*, both *Morning* and *Evening*.

Yea, every *Lords-day Morning*, you your selves make this *open Confession*, and *publick Praier*, in the Congregation, after the Reading of the fourth Commandment; *Lord, have Mercy upon us, and encline our Hearts to keep this Law*: As much as to say; Lord, we acknowledge we have neglected this thy Day: We pray thee, pardon all our unchristian Sabbath-breaking, for the Time past; and give us Grace, to observe the Christian Sabbath better for the future. Now will you *confess* in the *Forenoon*, and *transgress* in the *Afternoon*? Will you beg pardon in the Morning, and sin again the very same Sin before Night? Will you open your Mouths, to ask Gods Grace, to sanctifie and keep holy the Sabbath-day; and, it may be, profane it in a graceless manner, as soon as you are out of the Congregation?

If the *Lords-day* ought to be observed at all, it is to be kept *both Parts* of the Day. And for those that commonly *stay away in the Afternoon*, I would ask them, what their *Employment* is at home in the mean Time? Do not some of them spend the Afternoon in sleeping, or walking, or talking, or drinking, or gaming? while others are jointly confessing, and praying, and praising, and hearing? If God requires a *Day*, is this to sanctifie a *Day* to the Lord? To worship God in the Morning, and

to dishonour God, and serve the Devil, and divers Lusts, in the Afternoon. Do you spend your Time as religiously *at home*, as you might do *at Church*? Do you catechize, read, and pray, and sing Psalms at home in the mean Time? If you do, you do it *unseasonably*; and plainly break the *Lords-day*, by ordinarily performing private Duties in the Time of publick Ordinances: The *Lords-day* being chiefly appointed for the publick Worship and Service of God; The most *publick Worship* being the *highest Honour* that can be done to God and Christ.

Reading a Sermon, or some Catechistical Doctrine, at home, in the Time of publick Preaching or Catechising, though, *in it self*, it may be a *better* composed Sermon, or Exposition; yet is not *so good* as hearing a Sermon, or Exposition, at Church: For, the *publick Ministry* of the Word, is a divine Ordinance, which has a *special Promise* of Gods gracious Presence: *Matth. 28. last*: Go, *teach*, saies Christ, *lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the World*: You are therefore bound to frequent and attend upon it.

You must not *mis-time* and *mis-place* Duty: You must not read at home in private, when God calls you to hear in publick: You must not use one Ordinance, *in contempt*, or *neglect* of another: You cannot hope to profit, if you do. You can't expect Gods Presence, and look for the Gift of Gods Grace, in a way of Disobedience to his Command, and Neglect of his appointed Means. *When God*  
sets

sets up the Ministry of the Word in any Place, his Spirit then opens his School, and expects that all, who would be taught for Heaven, should come thither: Now whether is it most fitting, that a Scholar should wait on his Master at School, to be taught: or the Master should run after his truant Scholar, at Play in the Field, to teach him there? As the accurate Preacher, Mr. W. Gurnal, does well illustrate it.

Moreover, in Attendance upon publick Preaching, there are the *Praiers of the whole Congregation* put up for a Blessing upon the Word that is spoken and heard; which is an Advantage, that can't be enjoied in private Reading.

There is also somewhat in this; that the *lively Voice* of the Preacher is more affecting, and powerfully working, than private Reading.

And as for Reading the Scripture, and Books of Theology, it is to be feared, that they care but *little* for Reading, who pretend such Reading, to excuse their Absence from publick Hearing.

But grant you do read; yet certainly the Scripture and good Books were never written to *divert and hinder* you from publick Hearing, so long as you are *able* to go to the publick; but to *fit* you for it, and *help* you in it. Nay, the Bible, and good Books, *forbid* you to stay at home in Time of publick Worship and Service; and *command* you to be present at publick Praier, Baptism, the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, Catechising, Preaching:

Not



Not to forsake the assembling of your selves together, as the manner of some is. Heb. 10. 25.

Take notice further ; that if you, then every one, as well as you, may stay away, and read a Book at home ; and so, what will become of all publick Assemblies ?

Once more, consider ; you know not how much you may lose by but once neglecting a publick Ordinance. *Thomas*, by reason of his Absence, when Christ appeared to the Disciples, that were assembled together, lost the Advantage of receiving Satisfaction concerning the Truth of Christs Resurrection, and lay a whole Week in Unbelief. *John* 20. from 19. to 29.

That may be spoken in thy unnecessary Absence, so agreeable and congruous to thy Condition, as, it may be, thou maiest not meet with the like, for a long time after, if ever after. The Devil may be busie to detain thee from the publick, that very Day and Hour, when he knows well enough that is provided and prepared, which is most suitable to thee, and apt to work upon thee.

*Obj.* But he that preaches, is a Man of weak Parts, mean Gifts, and very ordinary Abilities.

*Ans.* But if he be an approved, ordained Minister ; be conscionable in his Place, and unblameable in his Life ; and if what he delivers, be sound and profitable ; blame your own Hearts, if you do not profit by him ; and take more Pains with them in hearing : and see that your Carelesness or Prejudice cause not your unprofitableness.

profitableness. It is a remarkable Saying of the Reverend and Holy Mr. *Arthur Hilderfam* :  
 ' I am perswaded, saies he, there is never a Minister, that is of the most excellent Gifts (if he have a Godly Heart) but he can truly say, he never heard any faithful Minister in his Life, that was so mean, but he could discern some Gift in him, that was wanting in himself ; and could receive some profit by him. You know, a Torch may be sometimes lighted by a Candle, and a Knife be whetted and sharpened by an unhewn and unpolish'd Stone. And it is considerable (which the same judicious Author adds there; that *the Fruit and Profit that is to be received from the Ministry, depends not only, nor chiefly upon the Gifts of the Man that preacheth, but upon the Blessing, that God is pleased to give unto his own Ordinance : and God does oft give a greater Blessing to weaker than to stronger Means : and therefore despise not any sound Ministry, because of the meanness of it.*

*Obj.* But some may say, The Exercise is too long, and the Season is too hot or cold, to come twice a Day.

*Ans.* But let me ask you ; Could not you willingly stay, in any Season of the Year, as long again at a Play ? 'Tis the Coldness of your Hearts, and your frozen Affections, that make you plead, either the Heat, or Coldness of the Weather, in excuse of your Absence from Church-Assemblies : and, I pray, seriously consider, whether Hell at last won't prove too hot, for wilful, careless, causeless Sabbath-breakers.

I shall

I shall further offer two Things to your consideration, to move and provoke you to a careful and diligent Redeeming of the *Lords-day*.

*Mot. 1.* The right Redemption of the *Lords-day* is an apt and likely means of redeeming the *whole Week* following:

Of { redeeming it as to *Temporals*.  
 { redeeming it as to *Spirituals*.

1. As to *Temporals*: They that serve God sincerely on the *Lords-day*, will use all Diligence and good Conscience, in their Calling and Trading on the *Week-day*. And their Pains-taking and honest Dealing, is likely to bring Gods Blessing on their outward Estates. Besides, They that faithfully worship God on the *Lords-day*, will seek to God for a Blessing on the *Week-day*: and they that seek it are likely to find it.

Once more; God won't be wanting to those, who would not be wanting to him: God will bless you six Daies, for your Blessing and Serving him one whole Day in seven.

2. Our Observation of the *Lords-day*, as it is a spiritual, wise redeeming of that special Season; so it is a good Help to the spiritual Redeeming of all the six Daies following. The more Liberty Men allow themselves upon the *Lords-day*, the more loose their Hearts are, and negligent of good Duties, and religious Exercises, all the *Week* after. They that pray not on the *Lords-day*, will hardly so much as say a Praier all the *Week* long. They that hear not a Sermon on *this Day*, will scarcely read a Chapter the whole *Week*. They that rob God

God of his due on the *Lords-day*, will rarely deal justly and honestly with their Neighbour on the *Week-day*. But if we keep holy the *Lords-day*, then every *Week-day* will have a Tincture and Savour of the *Lords-day*. Our being Spiritual on the *Lords-day*, will put us into a very good Frame of Heart, will awaken Principles of Conscience, compose our Minds, fix our Wills, call in and set in order our Affections: Our Sanctification of *this Day* will season and sanctifie us, fit and dispose us for a close and holy walking with God all the Week after. If we attend upon God, and converse with him on *this special Day* of his own Appointment; we shall find a *sensible spiritual Vigour*, a divine Power, and heavenly Strength, to carry us through all the Duties of the whole Week following, relating either to God or Man. If we earnestly redeem the *Lords-day*, the Observation of that *Day* will have a strong and mighty Influence on our Lives on *other Daies* too: We shall endeavour to carry our selves after it, *suitably* to it: to live, and walk, and act continually, as those that have newly, or lately enjoyed so blessed and happy an Opportunity; as those that have heard of God, heard from him, spoken to him, had to do with him: we shall labour to live in *pursuance* of the *End and Design*, of the Work and Business of the *Lords-day*.

Mot. 2. Our Sanctification and good Improvement of the *Lords-day*, will fit and prepare us to keep and enjoy a blessed Rest and eternal Sabbath in Heaven. They that delight in

in God here, will much more delight in him hereafter : and those whom God delights in here, he will delight in for evermore. They that keep holy the Christian Sabbath here, shall be translated and admitted to sanctifie and celebrate an everlasting Sabbath in Glory hereafter.

*He that loves Gods Abode, and to combine  
With Saints on Earth, shall one Day with them  
shine.*

But on the *other side* ; your gross continued Neglect, and wilful, resolved Profanation of the *Lords-day*, will *unfit and unqualifie* you, to keep a glorious festival, and a joyful, happy *Holy-Day* in Heaven.

God can take no complacency and delight in you, if you can take no complacency in him, no delight in his Sabbaths, no pleasure in his Worship and Service. They that refuse to sanctifie a Sabbath, and *totally* to rest on that *Day* from their worldly Labours, and secular Negotiations ; have reason to fear, lest God *sware in his Wrath*, that they shall never enter *into his Rest*, They that will not rest from their Works and Pleasures on this *Day*, have cause to conclude, that in Hell they shall have *no Rest, neither Day nor Night*. They that will do their own Works on the *Lords-day*, may expect to suffer for their evil Deeds in the *Day of the Lord*. They who wilfully absented themselves from *Gods House*, on *Gods Day*, have no ground to hope, that God will receive them

to Communion with himself in his *Heavenly Kingdom*.

And as God can take no *delight in you*; so, if you pollute and profane, break and violate the *Lords-Day*, neglect Religion, contemn the Worship, and despise the Service of God; if you *changed your place*, you would there no more *delight in God* than you do here. Heaven would be a Burden, *Heaven* would be an Hell to the *unsuitable Spirit* of an irreligious, profane, voluptuous Person. Thou that art *wearry of Praiers, and Praises* here, what wouldst thou do in Heaven too? there is nothing else there. You that are *sick of a Sabbath* here, and long till it be over, and can't endure to think of spending a *whole Day* in Religious Exercises; what wilt thou do in Heaven? where there is a *perpetual Sabbath* to be kept for ever. Thou that *hatest the Communion of Saints* here, I wonder what thou wouldst do in Heaven; where, next to the Fruition and Enjoyment of God in Glory, the best Entertainment will be the *Company and Society* of the holy Angels, and of the blessed and glorified Saints to all Eternity.

I have given you some *Motives* to perswade and engage you to the due Observation, and right Redemption of the *Lords-Day*: Now what are you resolved upon? Shall your former *Profanation* of this *Day* be the present *Burthen* of your Spirits, and sadness of your Souls? Will you live as those that are convinced, that *Religion depends* upon the *Sanctification* of this *Day*, and your *Salvation* upon *Religion*? Will you

you forbear any more to break into Gods *In-  
closure*, to encroach upon Gods *Propriety*, Sa-  
cilegiously to engross Gods *Day* to your selves,  
or to make bold with any Part of it for  
Worldly Employments, or vain Pleasures, or  
such Recreations as are apt to prove *Lets and  
Hindrances* of your Duties and Devotions? and  
be careful to give God that Portion of Time  
which is his *due*? Will you for the future se-  
quester your selves from worldly Cares, Affe-  
ctions, Affairs, on this *Day*? and henceforth  
dedicate the *Lords-day* to the *Honour* of God  
and Christ? Will you, not only cease to *cen-  
sure* those serious Christians who dare not lose  
this choice Time, and precious Opportunity,  
as profanely and desperately as formerly you  
have done? But will you so consider the *Worth*  
of this Time, and so far weigh the great Con-  
sequences, and weighty Concernments of the  
well or ill spending of it, as to *count it honour-  
able, and keep it holy*; without intermixing of  
secular Matters, or indulging profane Thoughts,  
and introducing inconvenient, improper Dis-  
courses, in any part of it? Will you labour to  
walk accurately, exactly, precisely, on this  
*Day*? and not be afraid of being too strict,  
of being *too holy* on this *holy Day*? 'Tis an ex-  
cellent Saying of Tully, *Nemo pius est qui pie-  
tatem cavet*: The plain English of which is  
this; No man is truly godly, who is afraid of  
*being too godly*. Will you therefore, for the  
future, cease to dispute your self out of your  
Duty, and forbear questioning your obligati-  
on to the observation of the *Lords-day*? And  
instead

instead of saying, How do you prove that I must keep it? Much rather say, How can you prove that I may not keep it? Will you labour to be so possessed and filled with real hearty love to God, and holiness, and so well affected to Communion with God and his People, and so sensible of the sweetness, benefit and advantage of Celebrating and Sanctifying the *Lords-day*, that you may not be contented and satisfied to live without it, to be careless and negligent of it, or formal and customary in it; and that, if you were not obliged by a command, and had but a bare leave from God to do it, you would with thankfulness, joy and delight, apply your self to it; and to your best ability, Religiously and Spiritually employ your self in it? Will you so observe the *Lords-day*, as you were ready to *promise* you would, when you lay last upon a *Sick-Bed*? And as careless Sinners commonly *wish* they had, when they come to lie upon a *Death-Bed*? Will you make every *Sabbath* here on Earth, resemble in some Degree that *eternal Rest*, which you hope to *hal-*  
*low* more perfectly in Heaven?

Seriously consider, *how many Lords-daies* you have *lost already*, and what reason you have to observe and improve those that *remain*. Do you know, *how few* such Daies you shall ever enjoy more? It may be *this Lords-day* may be the *last*. Before the next Sabbath comes, thou maiest be called to a *reckoning* for neglecting and mis-spending all that are past. Thou art not sure, that ever thou shalt pray in publick  
more:



more : that ever the *Liberty* shall again be afforded thee, of hearing another Sermon preached to thee : Thou maiest never enjoy such a blessed Opportunity to take pains with thy Family, and to save their Souls from Death, before thou diest. If God shall please to put such Prices into thy *Hands*, God give thee an *Heart* to make use of them.

Carefully redeem the *Lords-day*, and every Day after shew in thy Life that thou hast redeemed it. Make it appear by the Frame of thy Actions, and Course of thy Life all the Week long, that thou hast been under spiritual, *powerful*, quickening Ordinances the last *Lords day*. You that enjoyed *Communion with God* on the *Lords-day*, have no parley with Satan, no familiarity with Sin, *no fellowship with the unfruitful works of Darknes* on any of the Week-daies following. Be sure you every Day avoid those *Sins*, which you solemnly confess'd the last *Lords-day*, and live over the *Praiers* you made that Day : and live up to the *Sermons* you heard that Day ; and obey from the Heart that *Form of Doctrine*, which that Day was delivered to you. Perform every Day those *Resolutions* and Promises, which you made to God on the *Lords-day* ; and keep the *Covenant* you renewed at the Sacrament on that Day ; and maintain the *Warmth* that was wrought on your Souls by the Word and Spirit on that Day. Use every Day the *Grace* you ask'd, obtain'd and receiv'd on the *Lords-day* ; and act in the *Strength* and Power of Christ, which was communicated and given in

in to you, in your Attendance upon him in his own Ordinances, on his own Day.

This is the *second particular Season*, and special Opportunity, that is to be carefully redeem'd by every Christian; the *Morning of the Week*, the *Lords-day*.

And I have purposely treated so largely concerning the Redemption of the *Lords-day*, because it is so despised in the Judgment, and disregarded in the Practice of the *confident Men* of this dissolute and degenerate Age.

*The third Particular Opportunity to be redeem'd.*

As the *Morning of every Week*, the *first Day* of the Week, so the *Morning of every Day*, is a special Season, that ought to be redeem'd and improved by a Christian, to spiritual Advantage. The *Morning* is an Opportunity of giving God the very *first*, and *best* of the Day; and the chief of our Life, Spirits and Strength. In the *Morning* our *Spirits* are recreated and repair'd, and our *Bodies* strengthened and refresh'd with the Rest and Sleep of the Night past: and our *Minds* are vacant, and not disturb'd with those Images and Representations of Things, which the variety of worldly Employments in the Day usually fill and possess us with. In the *Morning* our *Minds* are most free, and our Affections most *lively*, (as those strong Waters are *fullest of Spirits*, which are *first drawn*) and our *Hearts* not so entangled and encumbred with the Things of the World. In the *Morning* we are clearest and fittest for

any thing ; and therefore, to be sure, fittest for God, and the Worship of God ; freest and freshest for holy Duties, spiritual Services, and religious Exercises. The Morning is as much a Friend to the Graces, as to the Muses, As the Morning is a special Time for Study, so for Duty : As it is the best studying Time, so it is the best praying Time.

The People of God have ever accounted the Morning the fittest Season for Devotion : And therefore we find, that holy Job rose up early in the Morning, and offer'd Burnt-offerings : Thus did Job continually : Job 1. 5. Not only in the Morning, but early in the Morning ; in the very Beginning, or first of the Morning. We read how God commanded, that the first of the first Fruits of the Land should be brought into the House of the Lord : Exod. 23. 19. So here, Job gave God, not only the first Fruits of the Day, but the earliest Time in the Morning, which is the first of the first Fruits of the Day ; the Morning of the Morning (as I may so speak). So David chooseth the Morning-season : My Voice shalt thou hear in the Morning, O Lord ; in the Morning will I direct my Prayer unto thee. Psal. 5. 3. It is a good Thing to shew forth thy loving-kindness in the Morning. Psal. 92. 2. I prevented the dawning of the Morning, and cried. Psal. 119. 147. And again : When I wake, I am still with thee, saies he ; Psal. 139. 18. He gave God the first of his fixed and settled Thoughts. It is recorded of our blessed Saviour, that he rose up in the Morning, a great while before Day, to

go into a solitary place to pray. *Mark* 1. 35. And 'tis said of the Apostles, that they *entred into the Temple early in the Morning. Acts* 3. 21. So we should enter into our Closets early in the Morning ; and make it our first business and employment to converse with God, and commune with our own Hearts, to betake our selves to Praier, and to Reading of the Scripture, and to give our selves to Meditation.

And surely (as a great Divine saies excellently) If Men would give some divine Precepts or Sentences full possession of their Morning Thoughts, these would serve as so many Armed Men, to keep out the Suggestions of the Devil, the World, and the Flesh, from entring into their Hearts. The filling our Minds, and possessing our Hearts with serious holy Thoughts in the first place, as soon as ever we wake in the Morning, is an excellent Means to prevent those frothy vain Thoughts, which are apt to arise in empty Hearts : As, you know, the taking a good Draught in the Morning, is the way to keep out the Wind, which would offend and trouble an empty Stomach. *When we first open our Eyes in a Morning* (as a worthy Doctor does well illustrate this matter) *many Vanities and Businessses stand like earnest Suiters, or as diligent Clients at Lawyers Doors, waiting to speak with our Thoughts, and ready to press and croud in upon us : but let us speak with God first, and he will say something to our Hearts, will fix and settle them for all Day.*

The Morning is a special Opportunity to be carefully redeemed ; and the rather to be re-

deemed, because *by redeeming the Morning, we are likely to redeem the whole Day following.* If a *Watch* or *Clock* be wound up well in the Morning, 'twill go right, and keep true all the Day after : So the winding up of our Hearts by devout Meditation in the Morning, will be a means of our regular Proceeding to the close and end of the Day following. If we *awake* with God in the Morning, we are likely to *walk* with God all the Day long. Our doing God service in the Morning, will stand us in stead all the Day after : will engage and oblige us, dispose and encline us to keep a *Decorum* all the Day, and to do nothing *unworthy* of our *Mornings Work*.

The serious Consideration of the Goodness and loving Kindness of God towards us, his Watchfulness over us, Protection, Preservation, Refreshment of us the very Night past ; will make us study to render suitably to such a Mercy ; and to *live to him* all the Day, who gives us, as it were, a *new Life* every Morning. Our labouring to get our Minds and Hearts, early and thoroughly possess'd in the Morning, with quick and lively Apprehensions, and powerful, deep Impressions of the glorious, *divine Attributes* and Perfections, of Gods Greatness, Holiness, Justice, Omniscience, Omnipresence, will keep us close to God and our Duty all the Day. Our being with God in the first place, as soon as we are up every Morning ; this will season our Hearts, spiritualize our Affections, awe our Consciences, and be a means to regulate our Actions,

and

and to sanctifie our Employments, Carriages and Converses the whole Day following.

Whereas if we neglect God in the Morning, God may justly leave us to our selves all the Day after. If we venture to go into the *World*, before we have first gone to God; we rashly rush into Danger, because we take not God along with us; whose Presence, Guidance, Grace and Strength, is our only *Safety* and great *Security* against the Malignity and Evil of the World. If we don't in the Morning, and Beginning of the Day, implore the divine Presence and Assistance, and beg Gods Providence over us, Direction of us, and Blessing upon us: If we seek not God, before we seek the *World*, before we seek *our selves*, we are likely to do nothing but mis-carry in every Thing all the Day: We are apt to be caught in every Snare, to be overborn by every Corruption, and overcome by every Temptation: and therefore be sure to *redeem* the *Morning-Season*.

*The fourth Particular Opportunity to be redeemed.*

4. The *Society and Company of the most Religious and Godly*, is another Special Opportunity, to be presently laid fast hold on, and faithfully made good use of.

You have here an occasion of *doing good*, by your serious and savoury Speeches. *Honest Hearts* will presently close with them, receive and embrace them, entertain and accept them, and not slight and reject them, scoff and mock at them.

Further ; You have here an occasion of *receiving good*, from others suitable and seasonable Discourses : you may be edified by their Gifts, profited by their Graces, quickned by their Affections, encouraged by their Examples, recovered by their Reproofs, directed by their Counsels, assisted by their Praiers, instructed, strengthened, and comforted by their Experiences. When you come in company with able, godly Ministers, or knowing, experienced Christians, you may put Cases, and have them resolved : propound Doubts, and have them satisfied : You may light your *Candle* by theirs : You may kindle your *Coal* at their Fire, and stay and warm your self well before you go away. Godly Company is an Opportunity to be prized, and improved. Whenever you enjoy good Company, make the best of it. Let not carnal Bashfulness, nor a vain and Worldly Heart (which is apt to seek idle and unprofitable Discourse) hinder and deprive you of the Profit and Benefit, which may be reaped by godly Society.

*The last Particular Opportunities to be redeemed.*

5. And lastly ; The *particular Seasons* of practising and performing *particular Duties* ; of getting and encreasing, acting and exercising *particular Graces* ; these have a *special, commodious Fitness*, for the *doing*, or *receiving* some *particular Good*, and ought accordingly to be embraced and improved by us:

When we know a Person (a *good Man* especially)

especially) to be in real *Necessity*, and great Extremity, then is an Opportunity of exercising *Charity*, in giving liberally according to our Ability. When another has *wronged* and injured us, then we have gotten a good Occasion of exercising *Charity*, and shewing *Mercy*, in free and full *Forgiveness*. When a Brother is fallen into Sin at any Time, then it is a Season to *restore such an one in the Spirit of Meekness*. Gal. 6. 1. When any Person is *flexible* and tractable, yielding and pliable, being melted and mollified by an afflictive Providence, or moved and enclined to hearken to us, by Dependance on us, Expectation from us, or any Relation and Obligation to us; we have a fair Opportunity to deal with such an one, at such a Time, for the furthering of his spiritual and eternal good.

When any are cast upon Sick-beds, and are somewhat awakened and softened by *Gods Hand*, then they are prepared for *your Hand*; you may the more easily work upon them. When any have newly received a Benefit from us, or hope to be shortly beholden to us, and so are ready to think well of us, and to take all well from us; then we may reprove, admonish, exhort them, with a comfortable Hope of happy Success, and good Effect.

The Conscience of a Man is a *nice* and *fullen* Thing; and if it be not taken at fit Times, there is no meddling with it.

And so likewise in respect of *our selves*; when we have received any fresh Mercy from God, or are actually enjoying the Blessings



of God, and tasting how good and gracious the Lord is, then is an Occasion of stirring up our selves to Praise and Thanksgiving. When we lie under an heavy Affliction, then it is a Season of acting and exercising Faith, Repentance, Patience : A convenient Season for Self-Examination, sound Humiliation, earnest Supplication, and thorough Reformation. When we find a secret Chearfulness of Spirit, then it is a Season to *spiritualize* our Joy and Gladness, to think upon Gods Mercies, to recount his Benefits, to set forth the Praises of our Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer. *Is any merry ? let him sing Psalms. James 5. 13.* When we find any Sadness growing upon our Spirits, then it is a Season to *spiritualize* our Sorrow and Sadness : to mourn and grieve for our Sins especially : to weep in secret for them, to confess and acknowledg them, and pray against them.

Once more ; When at any Time the holy *Spirit* of God, *joining* with the good *Word* of God, or *concurring* with the *Providences* and remarkable Works of God, does strongly work upon our Minds, and *sweetly* and *powerfully* move and stir our Hearts and Affections : When the Spirit instills any good Motions into our Souls, and kindles any good Desires in our Hearts, and kindly draws us on to holy Purposes and good Resolutions ; This is a *special Opportunity* indeed : This is *Temporis Articulus*, the very Nick of Time, which must be taken on a suddain, or its presently lost to our great Disadvantage. Do not fail to strike, while

while the Iron is hot. Step into the Pool, whenever the Angel stirs the Water. Launch out immediately, whiles Wind and Tide serve. When you feel any gentle Gale, spread open your Sail : This Wind blows when and where it listeth : You know not how soon this Wind may turn. Whenever the Spirit knocks, open the Door : You know not how soon he may have done, how quickly he may be gone. *Delicata res est Spiritus Sanctus*, saith *Tertulian* ; The Spirit of God is a nice and delicate Thing : It is soon offended, and quickly grieved. And therefore subject your selves to the Working of the Spirit ; and work with the Spirit, while the Spirit is at work : Gladly receive every Impression of this immediate, gracious, free Operator : Welcome every suggestion, of this blessed Monitor : Let every Inspiration find thee, as the Seal does the Wax, or the Spark the Tinder. Kindly entertain all its Visits, and readily obey all its Motions : Follow them home ; don't check and quench them, stifle and smother them : Never suffer them to die and decay, to languish, and perish, and come to nothing. Do the *Particular Duties*, the Spirit calls you to : Get, and grow in the *special Graces*, which the Spirit is ready to beget and encrease in you. Run freely and willingly, so soon as ever you feel and perceive that the Spirit draws you. If you don't stir when the Spirit moves, and act when it works ; you may drive and chase away the Spirit, and so lie dull and dead, graceless and helpless, and hopeless for ever.

And thus I have open'd and explain'd the Duty ; and shewn you particularly, both what it is to *redeem* the Time, and what the Time is that is to be redeemed.

The *Sum* of all is briefly this ; that our whole Life-time, and every particular occasion afforded us in it, must (whatever it cost us) by all means be laid hold on, and improved by us, for the glory of God, and our own and others spiritual Advantage.

### C H A P. III.

*The Grounds and Reasons why we ought to redeem the Time. The Special Reason laid down in the Text ; because the Daies are evil. What to be understood by evil Daies Daies are said to be evil, not inherently, but adherently, or concomitantly ; by reason of any sinful, or penal Evil that befalleth in them. The Evil of the Day, is either General, or Special : General ; the Shortness and Trouble, which does accompany the Time of this Life. The Particular Evil of the Day is, when any special Evil takes place in such a Time. The particular Evil of the Apostles Times three-fold. It stood (1.) in dangerous Errours and false Doctrines. (2.) In the vicious and wicked Lives of scandalous Professors of the Gospel. (3.) In sharp and hot Persecutions. How far these several Evils are to be found in these our Daies. Our redeeming of the Time, and*  
*endea-*

*endeavouring to grow better our selves, is the ready way, and only means to make the Evil Daies better.*

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*The Special Reason laid down in the Text.*

**I** Come now to the Grounds and Reasons of this Duty. There is a *special Reason* laid down in the *Text*. I shall first fully speak to that, and then I shall add some others to it. The Apostle here presseth Christians to redeem the Time, with this Reason or Argument, *because the Daies are evil.*

Now what is here to be understood by [*evil Daies*] ? *Daies* are said to be *good* or *evil* (saies Mr. Bayne) according to that which *befalleth in them* : As a good Time, when matter of Commodity or Merriment is in hand ; and an evil Time, when the contrary. The *Hebrews* call those *Daies* evil, which are full of Troubles and Difficulties (saith *Beza*). *Daies* are not *morally* evil : They are said to be *evil*, not *inherently*, but *adherently*, or *concomitantly*, by reason of any *moral* and *sinful*, or *penal* and *troublesome* Evil, that prevails and takes place within the compass of them.

Now the *noxia nuptas*, or *Evil of the Day* (as Christ calls it, *Matth.* 6. 34.) is either *General*, or *Special*.

*The General Evil of Daies or Times.*

1. The *General Evil*, is the Shortness, Trouble and Misery which does accompany the Time

Time of this Life. Of this *Jacob* speaks: *Few and evil have the Days of the Years of my Life been.* In this sence (saies *St. Austin*) the *Daies* were ever evil since *Adams Fall*, because *Mankind* has been subject to *Misery* ever since. Let us ask the *Children* newly born, saies he, why they begin with weeping, that are capable of laughing. The Child is born, and cries immediately: He laughs not till I know not how many *Daies* after. By crying as soon as it came into the *World*, it became the *Prophet* of its own *Calamity*. Its *Tears* are the *Witnesses* of its *Misery*. Before it is able to speak a *Word*, it foretells the manifold *Labours* and *Sorrows* it is born to go through in this *World*.

We may likewise reckon into the general *Evil* of *Times* and *Daies*, that common *Wickedness* which is to be found in the *World* in all *Ages* of the *World*. No *Time* or *Age*, but may be denominated evil, from the *evil Men* and *evil Manners* thereof.

2. The particular *Evil* of the *Day*, is, when any special *Evil* takes place in such a *Time*: And thus we must understand the *evil Daies* in the *Text*, of some *Particular Evil* that reigned in them; because it is spoken with an *Eminency* of those *Times*.

Now the *Evil* of these *Times* was threefold; There was the *Evil* of *Errour*: the *Evil* of *Looseness* of *Life* and *Manners*: And lastly, the *Evil* of *Persecution*.

The first *Particular Evil* of the *Apostles Daies*,  
and ours.

1. The *Evil* of those *Times* stood in the  
*Errours*

*Errours* and false Doctrines, which were vented and broached in the Church, and began to spread like a *Gangrene*. That which made those Daies Evil, was, the great Danger from Seducers, by reason of their *slight and cunning Craftiness*, whereby they lay in wait to deceive : Eph. 4. 14. Lay in wait, as a Thief to rob ; or as a Fowler, to take silly Birds : and made Merchandise of People with feigned Words : 2 Pet. 2. 3. And by good Words and fair Speeches, by plausible Pretences and Discourses, deceived the Hearts of the Simple, Rom. 16. 18. of easie and seducible Perions. That which made those Daies evil was, those damnable Heresies, silyly brought in by false Teachers : 2 Pet. 2. 1. and the Error of the Wicked (as it is called by St. Peter, 2 Pet. 3. 17.) Such Error in Judgment, as disposed Men to Wickedness in their Conversations.

Now this Evil of Errour, is to be found in ours, as well as in the Apostles Daies. The Times we live in, are Times of Seduction, erroneous Times. What a strong Head has Atheism gotten in this our Land, in these our Daies ! God governs the World now by *Wisdom*, which might sufficiently convince Men of his *Deity* : But because there are now no more visible sensible Appearances of his *Power* in the World, in the immediate exemplary Punishment of Sinners, therefore they fear and acknowledge him no more. And how doth Atheism in *Life and Affection* lead too too many to a radicated Atheism in *Judgment and Opinion* ? How many of the Gentry of this Nation

Nation are miserably tainted and *poisoned* with it ? So that our Nation comes far short of the State and Condition of the Heathen Rome, which Cicero thus describes ; *In Piety, and Religion, and in this one piece of Wisdom, that we have known and acknowledged that all Things are ruled and governed by the Power of the immortal Gods, we have excelled all Nations and People in the World.* How far are we this Day from deserving such a *Character* as this ?

When Atheism, Socinianism, Antinomianism, Quakerism, Popery, have broke in like a *Floud* : when Errours and Heresies have made such an *Inroad* upon us, and spread so far and wide among us : When so many so boldly deny the Providence and very Being of God, the Immortality of the rational Soul, and a Life and State of Retribution in another World ; the Divine Authority, Perfection, and Perspicuity of the sacred Scriptures, the eternal Duration of Hell-torments, the Divinity and Satisfaction of our Saviour Christ, the Divine Institution of the Lords-Day ; deny the Necessity of the Moral Law, disown Original Sin, and any such Thing as Special, Effectual, Discriminating Grace, infallibly securing the Event as to the Elect : Assert Perfection, contend for Papal Infallibility, plead for Idolatry, and gross Superstition ; and design, and endeavour, and hope to make Popery become the Religion of the Nation ; it concerns you surely carefully now to redeem the Time.

The *Evil of Error* mightily prevails in these

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our Daies. Seducers and Impostors are subtil and industrious; and Errour is of a catching, spreading Nature: Therefore (as St. Paul said to the *Corinthians*, 1 Cor. 11. 3.) I fear, lest by any means, as the Serpent beguiled Eve through his Subtilty, so your Minds should be corrupted from the Simplicity that is in Christ. Take heed that the *Leprosie* get not into your Head: (In that case, you know, the Priest was to pronounce a Man utterly unclean, *Lev.* 13. 34.) That Errour take not Possession of your Mind, for that is the Eye, the leading Faculty: and if it slip into the Mind, and Judgment, it will steal and creep into the Conscience, and that is so active a Faculty, that it will engage all. O do your utmost and best endeavour to keep your selves clear and free from the foul and infectious Errours of the Times you live in. Beware, lest ye being led away with the Errour of the Wicked, fall from your own stedfastness. 2 Pet. 3. 17.

1. Be not too credulous. Believe not every Spirit: 1 John 4. 1. Not every one that pretends to a Spirit of Truth, acting and breathing in him. Now the Air abroad is so pestilentially infected, take heed what Air you suck in. Be very wary what Money you take, since the Markets are so full of adulterate Coin.

2. Be careful to avoid the Meetings, and to shun the Society of Seducers. From Men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the Truth, from such withdraw thy self: 1 Tim. 6. 5. Don't venture to keep them Company, and to take their Breath, who have the Plague of wicked Errour



Errour upon them, and whose Converse is Death, and the eternal Ruin of your Souls. Forbear to hear their Discourses, or to read their Writings. You are bidden indeed to *try the Spirits* : 1 *John* 4. 1. that is, to try all you hear ; but you must not be bold to hear all, when you can shift it. The Wise Man forbids that ; *Prov.* 19. 27. *Cease; my Son, to hear the Instruction that causeth to err from the Words of Knowledge.* Remember the sad event of *Eves* Rashness, in venturing to listen to the Discourse of the Serpent.

3. And that you may be the better secured from *Error*, labour to get a good Understanding of your *Catechism* ; to be well grounded in the Principles and Essentials, and settled in the radical fundamental and practical truths of Religion, and thoroughly acquainted with the Necessaries to Salvation. Do not stick to say with *Luther*, *I confess, I am still a Learner and Studier of my Catechism.* Learn it yourselves, and teach it your Children and Servants, *understandingly.*

The want of Peoples being well instructed, and thoroughly grounded in the Principles of Religion, is a great Reason of the many Errors that have been so rife in these *late Times.* Men have not lyen fast in the Building, upon the *Foundation* ; and therefore it is, that they have so easily been tumbled up and down like loose Stones. Converse with your *Catechism.*

4. And confirm your Belief of the Divinity of the Scripture, by getting *rational Evidence*, and an *inward Sence* and Experience of it.

it. And search, and study the Scriptures ; and compare the Doctrines taught by Men with the Word of God, and try and examine them by that Rule.

5. Again ; Beg the *Spirit of Truth*, to lead and guide you into all necessary Truth. As it is not a strong Constitution that will secure you from the Plague, so it is not your best Parts that will preserve you from the Infection of Errour, if the Spirit of God do not keep and protect you ; if the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of Truth withdraw from you.

6. Add to all, your earnest Endeavour to get your *Hearts* renewed, *Rom.* 12. 2. and seasoned, and *stablish'd with Grace* : *Heb.* 13. 9. which will prove an excellent Preservative, a soveraign Antidote and Defensative against the Contagion and Infection of Errour. *2 Pet.* 3. 17, 18. Any Errour will easily slip into an ignorant, *uncatechized Head* ; and an unmortified, unsanctified, *ungracious Heart*. The *silly Women*, that were led captive, were such as were laden with Sins, led away with divers lusts. *2 Tim.* 3. 6. So they were *ungodly men*, who turned the Grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denied the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. *Jude* ver. 4. They that walk in loose Garments, soon take Wind : *Loose Lives* will gather in and breed loose Principles. If you don't take in sufficient Ballast of Grace to settle you, you will be tossed to and fro, and carried about with every Wind of strange Doctrine. If you want a good Bias of Sincerity for God, carnal Interests and Ends will easily mislead you.

you. If you be devoid and destitute of Grace, you will be proud and conceited, rash and unwary, you will never distrust your selves, you will never weigh and consider Things well before you take them up. Want of Grace will also breed an *Itch* of vain *Curiosity* in your Minds, and cause you to linger and hanker after *Novelties*. Further ; your depraved Wills will have a *malign Influence* on your Understandings ; and your carnal Affections will too often *bribe* and pervert your Judgments : So that whatever your Wills and Affections are vehemently set upon, must be allowed by the Authority of your Judgments, and secretly, if not openly maintained and pleaded for. Those various *Opinions* about the Chief Good, might arise and proceed from their *Over-affection* to some created and inferior Good. Your foul Stomach will infect your Brain : Your unsound Heart will cause a corrupt Head. And an ill Life will engage you to entertain and take up such corrupt Principles, as may favour and foster your Viciousness, give allowance and countenance to your Wickedness. Your Sin will become the Root of Errour. If you be loth to be ruled by the Laws of Christ, you have a Temptation from your own Lusts to turn to Antinomianism. As *Luther* said, that every Man had a *Pope in his Belly* : So, every wicked Man has an *Heretick in his Breast*. And let me moreover tell you, that without Grace you will never *taste* and savour, relish, love and like the *Truth* ; or have any sensible, sweet,

expe-

*experimental* Knowledge of it, which may engage and keep you close to it. The Truths of God are so suitable to a gracious Heart, that it quickly closeth with them : But the Errours of the Wicked are flatly against such and such *practical Impressions* upon the Soul of a Christian. A gracious Person has a good Complexion and Constitution of Soul, which *disgusts* and disrelisheth whatsoever is *contrary* to it. And therefore many an Errour lies but *unevenly* and *untowardly* in a good Mans Mind, when presented to his Thoughts ; And when an *honest-hearted* Christian hears some Sermon or Discourse that is erroneous ; though he be not able handiromely to detect, and *logically* to lay open the Nature, and Danger of the Errour ; yet it goes against him ; he cannot down with it ; he finds a strong *Antipathy* against it, he has (not by *Inspiration*, but by real *Impression* on his Soul) a *Witness within himself* against it ; an *inward Sense*, that disapproves it ; a *new Nature*, that nauseates, rejects, and rises against it. Just as the Sea, by the Strength of its *Nature*, casts up, works out, and purgeth it self of those Straws and Sticks, that Filth and Dirt, that Frippery and Trash, which flowed into it with the River-water. And therefore get a Principle of Grace into thy Heart, as ever thou wouldst keep Error out of thy Head. And be sure to hold a good Conscience, that you may be able to hold the Doctrine of Faith. 1 Tim. 1. 19. Hold the Mystery of the Faith in a pure Conscience : 1 Tim. 3. 9. Like Heavenly Manna, let it be kept in a pot of pure Gold. By

By all means labour to be *sound in the Faith*; Tit. 2. 2. and *hold fast the Form of sound Words*: 2 Tim. 1. 13. Resolve, by the Help of God, to *hold it fast* against all *Temptations* to let it go: Hold it fast in *Faith* and *Love*: Let the Grace of *Love* even *glue* you to the Truth, and constrain you to a firm Adhesion to it. *Receive the Love of the Truth*, that you may abide in the Truth, and may not be given over to *strong Delusions*, to believe a Lie. 2 Thess. 2. 10, 11.

Contend earnestly for the Faith, which was once delivered unto the Saints, Jude 3. Vigorously oppose *fundamental* Errours, such as *directly*, or *reductively*, expressly, or by *necessary* Consequence, destroy the Articles of our Faith. Contend for *Fundamental Truths*: for these *especially*, and most earnestly; but not for these *only*. Contend for *all* Truth; (All Truth is valuable) for the *least* Truth: The very Parings and Filings of *Gold* are precious. Contend as well for that, which is not acknowledged to be necessary to Salvation; as for that which is accounted commonly and ordinarily necessary, though not with an *equal* Contention. We are chiefly to look to the *Foundation*, or else the House will certainly fall: But yet we must look to the *Tiles* of the House too, or else the Rain will beat into the House, and in time the very Foundation may rot, and moulder, and perish. If we neglect those Truths which are not Fundamental, we may in Time be brought to neglect Fundamentals themselves.

Yet

Yet in *smaller* Errours be content to *bear* what you cannot *cure*. Very good Christians may have (as it is said of St. Cyprian) *naevos in candido pectore* ; here and there a *Mole* or *Mark* in otherwise a fair and *clear Breast*. Very honest Hearts may have some lighter Errours in their Minds, some Mistakes or other in their Judgments, which ought to be *prudently tolerated*, rather than Brotherly Peace and Union be broken and violated, or Christian Love and Charitable Affection be withdrawn and alienated. Wisely and carefully distinguish between those Differences in Opinion, which are as the *striving of one Israelite with another* (which is the Lord *Verulams* elegant Comparison) and those pernicious damnable Heresies, which are as the *fighting of an Egyptian with an Israelite* : You must, with *Moses*, be *mild and gentle*, fair and peaceable in dealing with the *former* ; but *sharp and severe* in oppugning and suppressing the *latter*.

Take care that you your selves don't desperately fall into the gross and grievous Errours of the Times you live in : And take all Opportunities, according to your Abilities, to inform and instruct, to gain, and win, and bring over the erroneous and incredulous, to the *acknowledging of the Truth, which is after Godliness*. Tit. 1. 1.

That is the first ; Redeem the Time, because the *Daies* are *evil* : Daies, in which dangerous Errours and false Doctrines are vented and propagated.

*The second Particular Evil of the Apostles Daies, and ours.*

2. *The Evil of the Apostles Times stood in the vicious and wicked Lives of scandalous Professors of the Gospel.*

The Daies are Evil ; that is, (saies Calvin) *All things are full of Scandals and Corruptions ; inasmuch as its hard for those that are good to be kept free from hurt, to be preserved untainted with the Infection of the Times.*

And in this Sense, the Daies we live in, are evil Daies too.

The present Age, is an *ungodly Age*. Iniquity every where *abounds*. *Mat. 24. 12.* Great and gross Irreligion and Profaneness, extreme Looseness and Licentiousness, boundless Sensuality and Voluptuousness, immeasurable Gluttony and Drunkenness, beastly Wantonness and Uncleaness, prodigious Pride and Haughtiness, bitter Animosity and Revenge, malicious Slandering and Backbiting, rash and uncharitable Judging and Censuring ; Lying, Swearing, Subornation, Perjury, Cursing, Sabbath-breaking ; Unthankfulness, Unfruitfulness, Want of Humiliation and Reformation under variety of sore and severe Judgments, Carelessness of Gods Providences, Contempt of his Word and Ordinances, Abuse of his blessed Spirit, Playing and Drolling with Scripture, Mocking at Religion, Scoffing at Holiness, and Enmity against Purity and the Power of Godliness, are now rise and common, the  
*reigning*

reigning and crying Sins of this Land and Nation.

Now *what should we do, to make a good Use, and due Improvement of such evil Daies as these ?* I answer ;

1. Are the *Daies* thus evil ? Let us then, in a right manner, be *troubled at the Evil of them*. It is said, that *righteous Lot, dwelling among the filthy Sodomites, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous Soul, from day to day, with their unlawful Deeds. 2 Pet. 2. 8.* [He] vexed [himself ;] was active in it. Saint Peter expresses more in *this* than in the former Verse (as Calvin observes) to wit, that *Lot did voluntarily and willingly afflict himself* : He did it freely ; he was not forc'd to it. He [vexed] himself ; *и скорбѣху*. 'Tis a Metaphor drawn from Torments, (saies Gerhard) The same Word is used to set out *Hell-Torments. Luke 16. 23.* This good Man continually tortured and tormented himself : He lived a grievous painful Life ; labouring no less, than if he had laien upon the Rack. It was a kind of *Hell* upon *Earth* to him, to see and hear such Things among them. They gave him Ground and Cause enough of Trouble and Grief, by their Impieties and Impurities ; and his righteous Soul could not but *work* upon that matter, and vex and afflict himself therewith.

The gross Wickedness of ungodly Men, is contrary to the *gracious Temper, and new Nature* of a good Man : And therefore he is no more able to *bear it*, than the *Stomach* can bear that which it *nauseates*. As a *Musical Ear* will



will be offended with any *harsh* Sound ; So Sin *grates* upon a godly Man, and is a *Discord* to him. At his *new Birth* there was implanted in his Nature a true Zeal to the Cause and Interest of Righteousness and Goodness in the World : An *inward Sense* of its Beauty, Excellency, and Usefulness in the World ; and a clear Conviction, and strong Apprehension of the Vanity, Unprofitableness, and Mischievousness of Sin in the World. The righteous Man has a real dislike of, a mighty *Prejudice*, and inward *Antipathy* against Sin, *as Sin* : He hates Sin, and loves Holiness heartily, wherever he finds it ; and really wishes that there were *no such Evil* as Sin in the World. He is of another Spirit than wicked Men are ; of a better Constitution, of a purer and more refined Temper. His new Nature and Disposition is directly contrary to that which is evil ; and therefore whenever he sees it, wherever he meets with it, it is a Vexation and Torment to him.

So holy *David* seriously laid to heart the Sins of others, was deeply affected with them, and heavily afflicted for them, *Horror hath taken hold upon me, because of the Wicked that forsake thy Law.* Psal. 119. 53. *Rivers of Waters run down mine Eyes, because they keep not thy Law.* Ver. 136. *My Zeal hath consumed me ; not because I have Enemies, and these Enemies despise me ; but, because mine Enemies have forgotten thy Words.* Ver. 139. *I beheld the Transgressors, and was grieved ; because they kept not thy Word.* Ver. 158. The Zeal of  
thine

*of thine House hath eaten me up ; and the Reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me. Psal. 69. 9. When he was in Trouble, he testifies his Sorrow for the Reproaches that fell upon God, as if he himself had been reproached. And the Prophet Jeremy could say ; My Soul shall weep in secret Places for your Pride. Jer. 13. 17. And the Saints in Jerusalem are described to be Men that sigh, and that cry, for all the Abominations that be done in the midst thereof. Ezek. 9. 4. And you know St. Paul is very famous for this Affection : In the case of the incestuous Person he wrote unto the Corinthians with many Tears, out of much Affliction and Anguish of Heart. 2 Cor. 2. 4. I fear, lest when I come again (saies he) my God will humble me among you, and that I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the Uncleanneß and Fornication, and Lasciviousneß which they have committed, 2 Cor. 12. 21. Many walk (saies he) of whom I have told you often, and now tell you, even weeping, that they are the Enemies of the Cross of Christ. Philip. 3. 18.*

1. O that it might be thus with every one of us : *Let a Time of others Sin, be the Time of our Sorrow* Let it greatly trouble us, to see our good God wronged, our Heavenly Father abused, and his holy just and good Law broken and violated ; To see the Gospel dishonoured, and Religion discredited : To see Satan pleased and honoured, and his Kingdom strengthened and advanced by the Wickedneß of the Wicked : To see the precious Souls of

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Sinners,

Sinners hazarded and endangered by their own wilful Sin and Wickedness : To observe *rational Creatures* living like mere *brute Beasts* : *Baptized Christians* acting like very *Devils incarnate* : To find Men rebelling against Light, resisting a Reproof, loath to be reclaimed, hardned in their Sin, and hating to be reformed : To see so many *Fools* and *Mad-men* besotted and bewitch'd, cruel to their own Souls, and Enemies to their own Peace ; refusing all Helps of Health and Cure, contemning the Means of their Recovery, fond of a Disease, in love with Slavery, devoted to their Enemy, courting their own Misery and Calamity, chusing Death rather than Life, eternal Life ; walking apace in the broad Way that leadeth to Destruction, running on in the way to Hell, the way that goeth down to the Chambers of Death : To behold so many stabbing themselves to the very Heart, greedily swallowing their own Poison, running into Pett-houses and infected Places, drowning themselves in Destruction and Perdition, and casting themselves into in tolerable, eternal, unquenchable Flames.

2. And let us moreover *mourn to see so much Hurt and Mischief done in the World by others open Sin and Wickedness* : To see Sin become so *fashionable* and *creditable* : To behold so many *corrupted* and infected, hardned and confirmed in Sin and Wickedness, by the *ill Examples* of loose Livers and vicious debauched Persons : To discern the heinous, provoking Sins of notoriously wicked Persons, *hastening*  
and

and pulling down *Judgment after Judgment* upon the Land of our Nativity, and the Places of our abode : To see Sin spread, this spiritual *Plague* encrease, and a *Cloud* of Divine Wrath and Judgment gathering, and growing thick and black, and hanging over our Heads, ready to drop and shower down upon us. Let us be so publick spirited, as to be troubled, exceedingly troubled, that so much Mischief, publick Mischief, should be done by others Sins : That so many should be drawn into Sin, or brought under *Suffering*, by the common and open Wickedness of the Wicked.

3. Farther yet ; Let it be a Thing very grievous to us, to meet with a Sort of Men, who instead of perplexing and tormenting themselves with the Sins of others, do please and delight, recreate and refresh themselves with the Sins of others ; Do tempt and entice them into sin, and hearten and harden them in their sin : Who are so far from troubling themselves at others sins, that they do the same, and have pleasure in them that do them : *Rom. 1. 32.* Who make themselves merry with those sins which make the Land mourn ; That will laugh at Lewdness, and make a mock at sin, and hear the Relation of anothers Wickedness with an inward Tickling, and secret Delight ; As if the Reproach and Dishonour of God were a very good jest, and the eternal Damnation of immortal Souls were a Thing fit to make sport with.

4. Once more ; Let it make our very Hearts ake, to take notice of some, who instead of

*vexing themselves with the unlawful, ungodly Deeds of the Wicked; do daily vex and afflict themselves with the lawful and godly Deeds of the Righteous: Who miserably trouble and torment themselves with the Goodness and Holiness, and not with the Vileness and Wickedness of others: Who storm at others strictness, and fret and fume at others forwardness in the way of Holiness; and are mad at heart, that any that live among them refuse to run with them into all Excess of Riot: To whom the very Presence and Company of a good Man is oftentimes as offensive and troublesome, as would be the visible Appearance of the Devil among them: Who heartily vex to hear at any Time any serious, savoury, good Discourse from them; and are tormented before their Time by the gracious Lives, and good Conversations of serious, conscientious Christians.*

5. And after all; *Let it be no small trouble and grief to us, to find so few troubling themselves with such matters as these.* That Men, too generally, should only regard themselves, and mind their own Bags, and Backs, and Bellies, and Bodies; and feel nothing but that which touches their outward Estates, and nearly concerns their worldly Interests; but wholly neglect and disregard the Cause and Interest of God and Goodness in the World. That so many, *so patiently* can see, and hear, and bear any open and common Wickedness; and if they can be *respected themselves*, matter it not much tho' God be *dishonoured*: So they them-

themselves be pleased, care little or nothing though God be displeased : And if they themselves can but get gain, let God and Religion lose what they will for them. That Men should count it a piece of *over-much Righteousness* to take any notice of others Faults ; and think it enough to cry God mercy for their own sins, without afflicting and tormenting themselves with the sins of others. That *Magistrates* should be so little sensible of daily Affronts done to God. That *Ministers* should see their Flocks running on to Destruction, and have no more Bowels of Compassion. That *Masters of Families* should not at all lay to heart their Servants Offences, and frequent Trespasses against their Heavenly Lord and Master. That *Parents* Hearts should even ake again, if any little Hurt or Illness come to their Childrens *Bodies* ; and their Bowels never yearn at all, though Mischiefe and Misery, through Sin and Iniquity, fall upon their *Souls* to all Eternity. That Men should kindly do their Neighbours any friendly Offices in *Civil* Matters ; relieve them, if in want ; visit them, if they be sick ; pull out their Oxe or Ass, if fallen into the Ditch ; and if their House be on Fire, presently run and help to quench it ; and yet never be affected with the sad and lamentable *spiritual* Estate of their Neighbours. That Men should see and suffer those about them to make shipwrack of a good Conscience, to lose their Peace, lose Heaven, lose their God, lose their Souls ; to be just falling into Hell-fire ; to grow violently sick of the

*Plague of the Heart* ; to die in their sins before their Eyes, and perish in their Iniquities before their Faces ; without fetching one sigh, or dropping one Tear for them, or speaking one Word to them, or lending a seasonable Hand to help them. How ought they to be *ashamed*, that can be passionately affected in other Matters ; and yet have no Passion, no Trouble, no Tears, for the common and dangerous sins of the *Times* and *Places* in which they live, and to which they belong ? Let us be *affected* with their *want of Affection* upon so great and urgent an Occasion.

Are the *Daies evil*, in respect of *evil Men*, and their *evil Manners* ? Let us be *troubled at the evil of them*. That's the first.

2. Are the *Daies* thus *evil* ? Let us then see that we be *not made worse by them*. Let's have *no Fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness*, (as the Apostle adviseth) Eph. 5. 11. Let's be *blameless and harmless, the Sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse Nation*, (as the same Apostle exhorteth) Philip. 2. 15. Where you see the Apostle argues from the *ill Quality*, and bad Condition of those among whom they conversed : For (as Grotius observes) *the Lives and Manners, both of the Jews, and unconverted Gentiles, were at that Time exceeding corrupt*.

And here the *Argument* holds these two waies,

(1.) It concern'd the *Philippians* to be sincere and upright, because they lived with such wicked Persons, who were ready to *slander* that  
that

that which was *good* ; and therefore would be sure to *aggravate* that which was *bad*. So *Estius*. And this same Duty greatly concerns our selves this Day, for the same reason.

(2.) It behoves us to be careful of our Conversation, in the midst of a wicked and adulterous, a crooked and perverse Generation, *that we our selves be not corrupted and depraved with the evil Manners of those among whom we live*. So *Zanchy* upon the place. Let's be careful to avoid all *Occasions* of sin, and to resist all *Temptations* to the sins, which *reign* and abound in the *Times* and *Places* wherein we live. Though we dwell among the Wicked, let's not communicate in their sin, nor give any countenance to their wickedness : But *beg* and *use* Gods Grace and Help, implore and employ the divine strength, for the overcoming and conquering the *Temptations* both of Men and Devils : And heartily *bleß* God, that we are not left and forsaken of God, and *given up* to the reigning Sins and Vices of the *Times*. Let's not be *conformed to this World* ; to the evil Customs and vicious Manners that generally prevail and take place in it ; nor *follow a multitude to do evil*. If never so many should *stab* themselves at their very Hearts, or *drown* themselves in the *Thames*, or *fire* their Houses with their own Hands to consume and destroy themselves ; would this induce any *wise* Man to do the like ? Why then should any offer to *drown* themselves in *destruction and perdition*, 1 Tim. 6. 9. to throw themselves into *Hell-fire*, and to cast away their



their *Souls* for ever, because *many others* do so? When Vice grows into Fashion, Singularity is a Vertue. When *Sanctity* is counted *Singularity*, happy is he that goeth in a manner *alone*; and walks unweariedly in the holy Path, tho' he has but *few* to bear him company in the *narrow Way* to Heaven. Though the *common Vote* should go against us, yet, with Holy *Joshua*, let us be *singular* in our vertuous Choice and pious Resolution. *Josh. 24. 15.* Let us, with *Noah*, be upright, and walk with God, even when *all Flesh have corrupted their way.* *Gen. 6. 12.* Let us, with *Lot*, be righteous even in *Sodom*; and keep our Garments undefiled and unspotted with the *Flesh*, even in a *Sink* of Sin and Uncleaness. Let's use all possible Arts and Means, to retain our *healthfulness* in a very bad and *corrupt Air*: To keep the *Spark* of Grace alive in the very midit of the *Ocean*: To preserve and maintain a gracious Disposition in the midit of a Deluge of Temptation. Let us labour to be like *Fish*, sweet and *fresh* in *salt Water*; like *Pearls* or *Jewels*, *sparkling* in a *Dunghill*: Yea, to be like the *Sun*, shining upon a *Dunghill*; whose pure Raies and clear Beams are *no way polluted* with the filthiness of it. Let's endeavour to be Righteous among the Unrighteous, and zealous among those that are careless and negligent of God and Religion: And let the *Coldness* of the *ambient Air* without, not extinguish or weaken, but *fortify* and strengthen our supernatural Heat within. Though we live in *bad Times*, yet let's keep our selves free from

from the *Evil* of the *Times*. And the freer we keep and preserve our selves from the taint and infection of the common Corruption, we shall the more notably *reprove* and *condemn*; discourage and discountenance the reigning Sins and abounding Vices of the Times we live in. Though we be *in* the World which lies in Wickedness, yet let us not be *of* the World; but pray to God to keep us, and endeavour to keep our selves *from the evil of the World*. *John*. 17. 15.

Let not us be the *worse* for these *evil Daies*; for if we be *made worse by them*; we shall also *make them worse*: Let our Care and Endeavour be, to be *good in evil Daies*: And as the Evil of Sin abounds, let us encrease in Holiness. Farther;

3. Let us labour, as to *be good*; so to *do good in evil Daies*: As to be *good our selves*, so to *make others good* in the *worst Times* that can be: By a holy and exemplary Conversation to be instrumental to their Conversion; and, if it be possible, a Means effectual to bring the very Worst and Wickedest home to God. In the *midst of a crooked and perverse Nation*, let us *shine as Lights in the World*, holding forth the *Word of Life*. *Philip*. 2. 15, 16. By our vertuous Lives, adorned with excellent Actions, let's shine as so many *Stars* before them: And be as so many *Lights set up in Towers*, to direct others how to steer aright their Christian Course, and safely to arrive at the Port of Eternal Rest, and the Haven of Heavenly Happiness. Let us *pity* and *pray* for

those who pity and pray not for themselves : Let us exhort, admonish them ; rebuke, reprove them ; and *save them with Fear, pulling them out of the Fire. Jude 23.* Let us labour in this manner to make the *evil Men* of the Times as much *better* as we can.

By way of *Motive*, Consider seriously these three Things.

*Mot. 1.* That if we grow *bad* in *evil Times*, we can fetch no *excuse* from the *Times* for our *Sins*. Men are apt indeed to translate the blame of their own *Actions* upon the *Times* and *Places* in which they live. *Seneca* complains of some, too ready to do so in his *Daies* : That would argue, and plead thus for themselves ; *I am not ambitious, but no man can live otherwise in Rome. I am not extravagantly sumptuous, but the City enforces great Expences :* It is costly and chargeable living in the *City*. But *why do we deceive our selves* (saies he) ? *This evil is not from any Cause without us, it is within us, it is seated on and sticks in our very Bowels.* Ep. 50.

If our *Minds* and *Hearts* were well disposed, and rightly enclined ; *Temptations* would prove like *Fire* falling upon *uncombustible matter*.

*Evil Times* and *Places* are indeed an occasion of *Sin* ; but the *Cause* is, our own *Hearts* and *Wills*. If we would carefully watch over our selves, and *above all keepings keep our Hearts*, we might keep our selves *unspotted from the World, Jam. 1. 27.* in the corruptest *Times* and *Places* ; as well as others, recorded in

Script

Scripture for our Example and Encouragement, have done before us. *The Badness of the Times* (as Mr. Dyke, occasionally citing my Text, notes well upon it) did not serve with St Paul for a Cloak to excuse our Conformity to the Times ; — but as a Spur to excite us to be so much the more careful of our selves, not to be swayed with the common stream. — And good reason have we (saies he) to make this use of the Corruption of the Times ; for, if the Air be generally infectious, had we not need to be so much the more strict in our Diet, and careful in the use of wholesome Preservatives ? Surely (as the same Author adds) the worse the Times are, the nearer grow they to their end ; and therefore so much the more apprehensive ought we to be of the Occasions of good, because the Day, in which only we can work, is declining apace, and that fearful Night approacheth, wherein none can work.

Consider,

Mot. 2. It will be our high Praise and Glory, to be religious and holy, when the Times are profane and ungodly : To be good Husbands in redeeming the Time, when others are prodigals round about us. As it's a great Sin to be bad in good Times, so 'tis an admirable Vertue to be good in bad Times. It is not so praise-worthy to be good in good Times, and among good Persons : But to resist the stream of evil Times and Persons, to tug hard against Wind and Tide ; to resolve to be good, and to endeavour to do good, against all Opposition and Discouragement whatever : Not to follow others in any sinful Waies and Courses ; but

to tread contrary, and to become *Examples* of Vertue to others ; this will tend to our great *Commendation*. He that can be strict among loose Livers, holy among most profane Persons, chaste among the Lascivious, sober among Drunkards, modest among impudent Railers, just among Defrauders, heavenly among Earth-worms ; He is an excellent Person indeed : He deserves an *Ecce* to be put upon him : We may say of him, as our Saviour said concerning Nathanael, *Behold an Israelite indeed !* This sets off the Righteousness of the Righteous, and makes it more conspicuous and glorious.

*Mot. 3.* Consider thirdly ; *That our Redeeming the Time in this manner, is the only way to make the Evil Daies better.* The Reforming and Amending *our selves* and *others*, is a proper means to alter and rectify the *Times*. The freeing both *our selves* and *others* from the *Evil* that is in any of *us*, will surely free the *Times* from the *Evil* that is in *them*. Our *Sins* are they that make the *Times* to be every way so *bad* as they are. Our aggravated *Sins* are the greatest *Evil* of the *Times* : And the *Evil* of *Sin* draws all other *Evils* along with it ; and therefore remove the *Evil* of *Sin*, and the *Times* will quickly be every way well amended.

*The Third Particular Evil of the Apostles Days, and in what Degrees of Ours.*

3. The *Evil* of the *Apostles Times* stood also in *Persecution*, which was *hot* then, and like to grow

grow hotter. Those Daies were *Ecclesie dies Caniculares*, (as *Tertullian* calls them) the scorching *Dog-Days* of the Church. The Apostles were forbidden to preach in the Name of Christ; and Christians were prohibited to name the Name of Christ. Then it was perilous for any Person to profess himself a *Christian*. The Confession of the Name, was enough to make Men the Objects of a publick *Odium*, without any Examination of the Crime. Only the Name did pre-condemn a Sect unknown, and an Author of it whom they were ignorant of; because they were *nominated*, not because they were convinced. If you should have search'd their Prisons, you should have found them fill'd with Malefactors only of their own Religion: you could not have seen a *Christian* there that was a Criminal, unless it were only on this Account, that he was a *Christian*. But (as *Tertullian* argues excellently in his sinewy Apology) if *Christian* be a Name of no Crime, 'tis ridiculous to make a Crime of the meer Name. Yet the *Heathen* (as he remarks there) fell so blindly into the hatred of *Christianity*, that whenever they gave a Testimony of the Probity of any such Person, they mingled some Expression of *Exprobation* for their Name. 'Twas common to say, Such an one indeed is a good Man, but only that he is a *Christian*. And again; I wonder that such an one, a wise Man, should of a sudden be made a *Christian*. To which it might have been well replied, That such an one is good, and such an one prudent, because he is a *Christian*: Or, it therefore appears that such an one

one is in truth a *Christian*, because he is prudent and good. As any was better'd by bearing this Name, he became by so much the more offensive; For the good that was in any Christian, was not of so great Force and Power as was the hatred against all Christians. Even an innocent Name was odious in very innocent Men. The *Gentiles* declared themselves Enemies to those who delivered them from the Power of Devils, and put up Prayers for them to the true God; and were ready to be trusty Guards about them, for the Preservation of them; and were Persons profitable to the Common-wealth. The same *argumentative Author*, in that most rational, convincing Defence of the Christians against the Heathen Magistrates, takes special notice that the *Philosophers* were tolerated, when Christians were urged under greatest Penalties to the most unreasonable Things: Who compels a *Philosopher* to Sacrifice, or to swear by the Gods? (saies he) They openly destroy the Belief and Worship of your Gods, and accuse your Superstitions in their publick Writings; and you applaud them for it: Many among them do bitterly inveigh against their Princes and Governours, and yet you patiently bear with them: and they are sooner honoured with Statues, and rewarded with Salaries, than sentenced to suffer the Fury of the Beasts: and all for this only Reason, because they are known by the Name of *Philosophers*, and not of *Christian Philosophers*. were permitted to propagate *Pythagoras's* Opinion of the Transmigration of separated Souls into other Bodies: But

if

if a *Christian* affirm'd the Return of the Soul into the same Body; the People not only followed him with *Blows* of the *Fist*, but even cast *Stones* at him. The Societies of the *Christians* were accused and prosecuted as *factions* Meetings: But did we ever meet together (says the fore-cited *Father*) to the Hurt of any one? We are the same when congregated, as we are when separated: wronging no body, grieving no body. When good and honest Men convene, when pious and chaste Persons come in Company together, it is not to be termed a *Faction*, but a *lawful Assembly*. But on the contrary, the Name of *Faction* fitly belongs to those, who conspire to an hatred of good and vertuous Persons, and exclaim together against the Blood of Innocents. The *Christians* were censured as the grand Causes of all general Calamities, and publick, popular Incommodities. If *Tiber* flow'd up to the Walls, if *Nilus* did not over-flow the Fields, if the Heaven stop'd its Course of seasonable Rain, if there were an Earth-quake, or Famine, or Plague; then presently they cried, *Christianos ad leonem*; away with the *Christians* to the Lion. But such was the malignant Method of their Cruelty, that they ordered *Christianam ad lesionem, potius quam ad leonem*: They condemned a certain *Christian Virgin* rather to be prostituted to the Lust of a lewd Person, than to be delivered to the Rage of a devouring Lion: By which they confess'd, that the Corruption of their Chastity, was more intolerable to *Christians* than any Punishment, more grievous.



grievous and afflictive than any Death. Christians were commonly punish'd like *Slaves*, made to serve in the *Mines*, or banish'd into *Islands*, or shut up in *Prisons*, and put to the *Sword*, or consumed with *Fire*, or hung upon *Crosses*, or cast to *wild Beasts*, only for the *sake of Christ's Religion*. Sometimes they were covered with *wild Beasts Skins*, and torn in pieces with *Dogs* : and when the *Day* failed, they were burnt with a *pitched Coat* upon them, to serve as *Torches* to give light in the *Night*. Yea the enraged common People ( as *Tertullian* informs us ) during the *Fury* of the *Bacchanals*, did not spare the very *Christians* that were *dead* ; but drew them from the rest of their *Graves*, and the *Sanctuary* of their *Se-pulchers*, and tore and dragg'd their Bodies in the *Streets*, now so much changed and altered, mangled, and defaced, that it could not be known whose Bodies they were. The *blind vulgar* sort of People, exulted and insulted on Occasion of the *Abuses* that were offered to the *Christians*; and some of the *Magistrates* gloried in the cruel *Usages* of the *Christians*, thereby to gain the *Favour* of the *People*. As many as owned and acknowledged themselves the *Disciples* of *Christ*, did presently draw the *Rage* and *Fury* of *Hearthen Idolatrous Persecutors* upon them. But it is *notably* observed in the forementioned *Apology*, as a Thing the *Christians* gloried in, that, of all the *Emperours*, *Nero* was the *first* that was fierce upon the *Christians*, and made a *Law* to condemn them to *Death* ; who never was known to condemn any Thing but what was *greatly good* and singularly.

larly worthy. It was this *Prodigy* of Cruelty, that put *St. Peter* and *St. Paul* to Death, causing the one to be crucified, the other to be beheaded (which *Tertullian* is judged to have here respect to) and who (as *Historians* affirm) suborned false Witnesses against the *Christians*, and put many of them to Death, as Authors of that Fire, which he himself had caused to be kindled in twelve Places of *Rome* together, that he might more lively represent to his Fantasy the general Conflagration of *Troy*. It is moreover pleaded, and strongly urged there in the behalf of the *Christians*, that the most vicious Princes alwaies proved their most violent Persecutors: But that they that were most virtuous, became their Favourers and Protectors: (an eminent Instance of which he gives us in *Marcus Aurelius*) That *Trajan* did, in some Part, frustrate the Lawes that were made against them, and forbade the making Enquiry after them: That no *Adrian*, no *Vespasian*, no *Pius*, no *Verus* confirmed the Laws against the *Christians*. But if the *Christians* had been a naughty Sect of Men, surely then the best, and not the worst of Princes, would have been their open Adversaries, would have set themselves in greatest Opposition against them, and have endeavoured to eradicate and extirpate them.

Sharp and hot Persecution was a sore evil in the *Apostles*, and in many of the *Primitive Christians* Days: And the *Christians* that lived in those hard Times, were bound to do and suffer any Thing, that so they might make use of a good Opportunity of an evil Time

Time; and gain an Occasion of honouring God, and Christ, the Gospel, and of furthering their own and others Salvation.

And this was their *Practise*, as well as their *Duty*; for as (*Salvian* saies concerning them) ascending to the Gate of the heavenly Court by the several Steps of their own Punishments, they made as it were Ladders for themselves of the several Instruments of their Torments.

But, blessed be God; he has provided better Times for us than those. They that are called by the Name of *Christians*, are not so persecuted in the Times and Places wherein we live. I may here very pertinently apply both to our Times and to our selves that pious Passage of the forementioned *Father*. But some perhaps will say, (saies he) that it is not now a Time wherein we are in Danger to suffer such Things for Christ, as the Apostles formerly did: True, saies he, for our Princes are not now Pagans, nor our Governors Persecutors: the Blood of Saints is not shed now a daies, nor is our Faith tried by Torments. Our God is contented that we should worship him in the Christian Religion upon more mild and moderate, more gentle and favourable Terms than others have done; that we should serve him in quiet, peaceable, prosperous Circumstances; and that we should please him only with the Purity of our unspotted Actions, and with the Sanctity of an undefiled Life: So that our Faith and Devotion is the more deeply indebted to him, because he exacteth less of us, and yet hath vouchsafed more to us. And therefore since our Princes are now professed Christians, and we are not under any Persecution

secution from the higher Powers, and our Religion is not disturbed ; we that are not forced to make Proof of our Faith by harder Experiments, ought certainly to study the more to please our Lord and Master, by being faithful in those cheaper Services and less costly Duties that lye before us, and are incumbent on us : For he that fulfils his lesser Offices, does give some proof and pledg thereby, that he would be ready to perform his Duty in higher Instances and harder Matters, if the Case required it, and if he were called to it. So far that ancient and excellent Father.

And truly, how reasonable is't, and how becoming, that if God do not call us to suffer so great and terrible worldly Evils in the Cause of the Gospel and the reform'd Religion, we should therefore readily and cheerfully bear and sustain Troubles and Exigencies of less Weight, at his Desire and Request : That we should confess him by Integrity and Fidelity in his Service, and please him by Abstinence from unlawful Pleasures of what kind soever ; none of which can be so dear to us as is our Life : That we should speedily part with our Lusts, when we are not commanded presently to part with our Lives : That we should regulate and reform our Lives, when we are required to lay down our Lives, and to shed and sacrifice our Blood. Thanks be to God, we are free from the Magistrate's Persecution in the Cause of Religion.

But beside such Persecution arising from the Civil Magistrate, meerly upon the Account of Christianity, or of the Profession of the Reformed

formed Religion ; there is *another Persecution* proceeding from *wicked Men*, whereby they *persecute* those that are *good*, these two Ways ;

1. By their injurious Carriages towards them in Particular.

2. By the Wickedness and Ungodliness of their Lives in General.

1. *By their Injuries and Indignities Offer'd and done to good Men in Particular.* He that departeth from evil, maketh himself a Prey. Isa. 59. 15. He that will not do as others, is in Danger of being *undone* by others. He cannot be *safe*, that will not be *wicked*. It is not enough, that the *Wicked* will not be the *better* for the *Good*, but the *Good* shall be some way the *worse* for *them*: If they cannot *corrupt* and *deprave* them they will *molest* and *disquiet* them : If they cannot draw them into *Sin*, they will, if possible, bring them into *trouble* and create them, *Suffering* and *Sorrow enough* : They will endeavour, some way or other, to infringe their Liberty, to disturb the Peace and Quiet, and to destroy the Comfort of their Lives : They will sometimes *sin*, if it be but of purpose to grieve *them* : as by beginning, and offering to impose *Healths* in drinking, out of a Design to *displease* and dissatisfy, or *ensnare* and entangle some part of the Company ; who, they know, will either refuse and deny it, or be drawn with Reluctancy and unvvillingly to it. So likewise by customary *Swearing*, and by repeating and multiplying their Oaths, to vex and trouble a *sober Reprover*. And, in like manner, by railing, reviling, vain and idle speaking

ing, frothy and filthy Communication, on purpose to cause Vexation and Affliction.

Of all which Course and Carriage of theirs you may take this double Account ; The Wicked have a *Prejudice*, and an *Antipathy* against the Righteous ; and these are the Reasons of their Dealing with them in this manner.

1. The Wicked have a *strong Prejudice* against them : They have a *wrong Opinion* of them : They judge amiss concerning them. He that departeth from evil is counted a *mad Man*, or causeth himself to be counted a *mad Man* : So some render that Place, *Isa. 59. 15.* as *Elisha's Minister* was called a *mad Fellow. 2 Kings 9. 11.*

Again ; Ungodly Men count those that are good the *Troublers of Israel*, and *pestilent Fellows* ; the *Causes of Calamities*, and *Procurers of Judgments* (an Imputation which we shewed you out of *Tertullian* was cast of old upon the *Primitive Christians*). They reckon those a very *Plague and Curse*, that are a *Blessing* to the Places where they live, and under God the grand Preservers and chief Supporters of them. They judge those *unworthy to live*, of whom *the World is not worthy* ; *Heb. 11. 38.* and to whose *living and dwelling* among them they themselves do sometimes owe their very *Lives*. They deem those as the *Filth and Off-scouring of the World*, *1 Cor. 4. 13.* who are indeed Gods *Jewels*, *Mal. 3. 17.* and the *Excellent in the Earth*, *Psal. 16. 3.* and *more excellent than their Neighbours.* *Prov. 12. 26.*

They

They look upon good Men as troublesome and vexatious, proud and imperious, because they reprove them.

2. The Wicked and Ungodly have an *Enmity* and *Antipathy* against good Men : They are *Despisers* of those that are good : 2 Tim.

3. 3. It is in the Original *ἀφιλάγαδοι*, not Lovers of the good : *Haters* and *Persecutors* of all good Men ; So Dr. Hammond paraphrases upon that Place. They are displeased with them, because they study to please God ; and are careless of them, because they have a care of their Time, a care of their own Souls : They hate Holiness, and the Righteous for it : They hate him that rebuketh in the Gate, or, in publick. Amos 5. 10. And as it is expressed, Isa. 29. 21. They make a Man an Offender for a Word, and lay a Snare for him that reproveth in the Gate, and turn aside the Just for a thing of nought ; by falsehoods make the Cause of the Righteous go the wrong Way. They cannot endure the Dispositions and Affections, nor bear the Lives and Conversations of the Godly, which they find as contrary to their own *Humours* and *Manners* as can be. We have a notable lively Character and Description of them, *Wisd.* 2. from the tenth to the end ; Let us oppress the poor righteous man, say they, let our Strength be the Law of Justice : Let us lye in wait for the Righteous : Because he is not for our turn, and he is clean contrary to our Doings : He upbraideth us with our offending the Law, and objecteth to our Infamy the Transgressings of our Education. He professeth to have the  
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Knowledge of God ; and he calleth himself the Child of the Lord. He was made to reprove our Thoughts. He is grievous unto us even to behold : for his Life is not like other Mens, his waies are of another fashion. We are esteem'd of him as Counterfeits : he abstaineth from our waies as from Filthiness : he pronounceth the end of the Just to be blessed, and maketh his boast that God is his Father. Let us see if his Words be true : let us examine him with Despitofulness and Torture : let us condemn him with a shameful Death, &c. The Wicked are so ill natured as to render to the Righteous evil for good : To vex and abuse their Physicians, Chirurgions, Advocates, Guardians, Friends : To use them *harshly* and *unkindly*, that endeavour to *benefit* them by their Counsels, to *better* them by their Examples ; and labour, by earnest Praiers to God for them, to keep off many a Judgment that hangs over their Heads from falling upon them, They watch and study to *harm* those that are really ready to *help* them : to grieve and break their *Hearts*, whose *Bowels* yearn towards them : to vex and torment their *Souls*, which is a greater Misery than to persecute and afflict their *Bodies*.

2. The Wicked *persecute* those that are good as by their Injuries to them in particular, so by the *Wickedness* and *Unholiness* of their *Lives* in General. The ill Conversation of the wicked, is a *spiritual Persecution* of the Godly : It is matter of exquisite *Torment* to them : It wounds and rends the very *Souls* of the Righteous :



teous : It plainly cuts them even to the Heart, and makes their very Heart bleed.

I find St. *Austin*, in a Discourse of his upon my Text, insitting pathetically and particularly on this very kind of Persecution; applying and accommodating that of the Apostle, *Tim.* 3. 12. *All that will live Godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer Persecution.* Behold here, saies he, because the Daies are evil, there is no living for the Righteous without suffering Persecution. But ye, saies he, are ready to say thus to me : *What?* when we enjoy Peace among us, when the Judges of the Provinces honour the Church, when Kings and Princes do not appear and carry themselves as Enemies to the Church, and when all the Laws are in favour of the Church; pray how do they that live Godly suffer Persecution? His Answer is, that they that live among wicked Persons do suffer Persecution for all this : *Why so?* Because all the Wicked do persecute the Good, *Non ferro & lapidibus, sed vita & moribus* : [though not with Fire and Fagot] though not with Swords and Stones, yet by their Lives and Manners. Did any persecute righteous Lot in Sodom? saies he. No Man troubled or molested him : [We read indeed of no Rudeness of theirs towards him, of no Assault made upon him, but only of one, done just before his Departure out of Sodom.] And yet that good Man suffer'd continual Persecution, *Non vapulando sed inter malos vivendo* ; not by being beaten and smitten of them, but by living among those vile and vicious, proud, blasphemous, lewd and debauch'd Persons : For, whoever is truly righteous and holy, saies

saies he, when he sees any to live wickedly, to serve *Luxury*, to carry Things unjustly, to follow *Pride and Vanity*, to disregard *Charity*; when they that are good see any live after this manner, they mourn and grieve, are sadned and afflicted; for with the *Apostle*, they bewail many that have sinned already, and have not repented.

It is said, that just *Lot* was vexed with the filthy Conversation of the *Wicked*: 2 Pet. 2. 7. The Word which we render *vexed*, is in the Original *κατα πόνεσεν*, he laboured under it as an heavy Burthen, was oppressed, wearied, grievously afflicted with it. And as *Lot* was burthened with the loose and lawless Lives of the *Sodomites*; So good *Jeremiah* was wearied out with the wicked and exorbitant Courses of the *Jews*, and constrained to cry out under the Pressure and Persecution of them, *Oh that I had in the Wilderness a lodging Place of way-faring Men, that I might leave my People and go from them*: To wish with all his Heart that he might withdraw himself from his People, and live in any solitary Desert, and in any solitary Traveller's Lodge, or Shed there, rather than among them, whose wicked Lives were such a continual Eye-sore, and daily Heart-sore to him: for, they proceed from evil to evil, saies he; from one evil to another; or, from one degree of it to another; they grow daily worse and worse; and weary themselves to commit Iniquity: Take Pains to do wickedly, and tire out themselves in it. Jer. 9. 2, 3, 5.

Alas! the wicked little think, how they

*vex* God in *vexing* his *Servants* ; and that God will one Day sorely *vex* them for it, and make them weary of *wearying* his People ; that he will *torment* them in Hell hereafter, for *tormenting* his People here on Earth.

They little think, that the Righteous themselves will one Day heavily, *vex* those that have given them such *Occasion* and *Cause* of *Vexation* ; *vex* them in the Day when the *Saints* shall judge the *World*. 1 Cor. 6. 2.

Yea, they little think, that they shall *torment* themselves hereafter, for making good Men torment themselves here. That if they do not grieve in *Time* with a *penitent* Grief, they shall certainly grieve with a *desperate* Grief, to all *Eternity*, for being a Grief and *Heart-break* to the Godly.

Now *this* *Persecution*, which in the *Waies* fore-mentioned is managed and carried on by the *Wicked* ; as it is the *Evil* in some measure of *all* *Ages*, so more especially and remarkably of the *Times* and *Places* in which we live. 'Tis true, that now we suffer nothing *barely* for owning the Name of *Christians* : There is no *Persecution* in our Nation merely for the outward *Profession* of the *Christian*, and of the *Reformed Religion* : But was ever the *other* *Persecution* *better* among us than in *these* *Daies* ? How do the *Wicked* persecute with their *Eye* ? Looking upon the sincerely Godly with an *evil*, a scornful, a malicious Eye. How do they persecute them with their *Tongues* ? (which are as so many *sharp Swords*, *Psal.* 57. 4.) maliciously *slandering*, *reproaching*,

ing, reviling the Godly, as a Company of weak Fools, and conceited Fanaticks; frequently making them their very Songs in their drunken Meetings, and even *mocking* their very Praiers in their publick *prophane* Playes; and often uttering very false, and proud, and hard Words against them.

And, according as they meet with Occasion and find any Opportunity, how do they persecute with the Hand? Do evil with both Hands earnestly? Micah 7. 3. How ready are their Hearts to rise against them, and their Hands to be lifted up to strike at them, and to pull them down to the very Ground, that so they may be trampled upon, and trodden under Foot? Yea, how do they persecute them by their Lives? continually *vexing* their pious Souls with their *unlawful* Deeds; grieving and wounding; paining and piercing their very Hearts. The wilful Wickedness of the bold and daring Sinners of the Times, in their open dishonouring God and Religion, is a cruel Torment to serious Souls; and makes their Lives a wearisome, pressing Burthen to them. They that live Godly, do suffer daily the sad Persecution of wicked Mens *offensive*, *afflictive* Lives and Manners. What a Persecution is this? to force good Men to cry out with David, *Who is me that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the Tents of Kedar: Ps. 120. 5. To cause Rivers of Waters to run down their eyes* (as they did from Davids) *because Men keep not Gods Law. Psal. 119. 136.*

Now since we live in such evil Daies, in

which there is such *inveterate enmity* against the Practise of Piety, and such a *malignant persecuting Spirit* reigning and raging in the Breasts of the Wicked against the Good ; let us keep a *prudent Silence in an evil Time* Amos 5. 13. Let us take care that we do not *unnecessarily provoke* and exasperate them ; for we know not what their Malice may grow to : nor give them any *just Occasion* of furious, vexatious Opposition. Let us see that we do not *suffer as evil-doers* from them, 1 Pet. 4. 15. nor as rash and heady, imprudent and unwary Persons. In *evil Daies*, evil will come *soon enough* upon us : And we have no reason to accelerate and *hasten* our own Suffering. Let's labour therefore by all *discreet* and wise, direct and *innocent* Means, to keep our selves out of their Hands, to prevent their taking Advantage against us ; and endeavour to sojourn our selves in God, and to preserve the Comforts of a good Conscience : To be patient under, and to glory in our Sufferings from them : To consider with our selves, that it is far better to be *troubled* by the *Wicked*, than to be *Troublers* of the *Good* : and to be thankful and joyful that we are not guilty of their Wickedness, nor deserve such Usages at their Hands. And let us study, and endeavour to render, not *evil for evil* ; but still to return *good for evil* to the very worst Rom. 12. 17, 21. and wickedest of them. 1 Thess. 5. 15. And whatever *Measure* we receive from them, let us not be *disheartned* and discouraged and dash'd out of Countenance by them, nor suffer  
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our selves to give Way to their Wickedness; to be wearied out of our Holiness, to be laughed, and jeered, and scoffed out of our Religion; but let's run the *Race* that is set before us, though all the *Dogs* in the Street bark at us. Let us with Zeal and Courage bear up against them: and bear Witness against them: and if we cannot win and gain them, at least shame and silence them, judge and condemn them, by an holy, unblameable, exemplary Life, as *Noah condemned the Old World*. Heb. 11. 7. Like *Stars*, let us appear most clear and bright in the sharpest and coldest Night. And let the vexation we meet with from the Wicked here, drive us the oftner to God, to make our Complaint and Moan to him; and cause us to long the more earnestly for Heaven, where we shall be for ever out of the reach of Satan, and all his Instruments, and out of all Danger of any Enemy, Persecutor, or bad Neighbour.

And so we have fully considered the Reason in the Text; the force of which, even as to our selves, lies plainly thus; The *Daies* are such, wherein ye are in Danger of *Infection* by the wicked *Errors* and damnable *Heresies* of the Times: In Danger of *Corruption*, by the common Sins and reigning *Vices* of the Times; and in Danger of *Persecution*, by the *injurious Carriages*, and *grievous wicked Lives* of the profligate and desperate Sinners of the Times: And therefore *redeem the Time*, because the *Daies* are evil in these respects.

These various *Evils* must not make us give

place to Unfruitfulness, but make us much more careful and watchful to take every good *Occasion*. If an *Harvest-Day* be cloudy and windy, or prove *catching Weather* (as we call it) Men will not therefore keep in, but work more diligently and warily. Good *Opportunities* in *evil Times* are few and scarce: The more *rare* these *Commodities* grow, the more we should *engross* them. And as some kinds of good *Opportunities* are *hard to come by*, so *not like to abide* and continue long with us in *evil Times*; and therefore while the *Occasion* lasteth, we should strive to make the utmost *Advantage* and *Improvement* of it.

#### C H A P. IV.

*Six other Reasons added to that in the Text. We ought to redeem the Time; (1.) Because our Time is afforded us by God to this very End and Purpose. (2.) Because we have all of us lost much Time already. (3.) Because the Time, that remains, is very short and uncertain, and our Special Opportunities far shorter, and more uncertain; and the Work, we have to do, very great. (4.) Because we can neither bring Time back, when once it is past unimproved, nor any way prolong and lengthen out the Daies of our Lives, when Death comes to put an End and Period to them. (5.) Because we shall all be certainly called to an Account*

count for our Time. (6.) Because this Time is all we can redeem, and upon this short Moment of Time depends long Eternity.

**B**UT besides the Reason in the Text, I shall farther shew you that we ought to redeem the Time upon a six-fold Account.

*The first Additional Reason.*

We must redeem the Time, because our Time is afforded us by God to this very End and Purpose, that we should improve and apply it to rational and religious uses. Our Time is given us to study to know and acquaint our selves with God and our selves : To contemplate the Creator : To rise and ascend from the Effects to the prime Cause and ultimate End : To seek and embrace the first Truth, and chief Good ; which only can satisfy Mans Mind, desirous of more Truth ; and his Will, capable of more Good than finite Beings can afford : By diligent Searching to find out God to be our absolute Owner ; supream Governour, and great Benefactor ; and to labour to be suitably affected towards him, and every way answerably observant of him : To own and acknowledge, love, fear, and serve the Author of our Beings, and Patron of our Lives : To put our Trust, and place our Confidence in him ; and to take care to promote and advance his Interest in the World. To contemplate and reflect upon the Royal Pedigree, the noble and divine Extraction, the high and heavenly Original,



ginal, the excellent Nature and large Capacity of our incorporeal and immortal Souls, the Alliance of our Spirits to the Father of Spirits ; and to charge our selves to live and act *worthy* of so high and honourable a Descent, so noble a Nature, such excellent Endowments. To consider and ponder the direct *Respect* and certain *Reference* that this Life has to another : That the World we live in, we must not live alwaies in : That this is not the place of our Happiness and Rest ; That we are but Pilgrims and Strangers here, and Travellers toward *a better Country* : Heb. 11. 16. That this World is but the *Road* and *Way* that surely leads to another : That this World is but a *Nursery* for Eternity ; that we are *planted* in this, in order to our *transplanting* into the other World : That the present Life is not a durable, permanent Condition, nor the *final state* of Mankind ; but is only intended as a certain preliminary, *preparatory State* ; and fitly contrived, and wisely designed by way of present *previous Probation*, in order to future Happiness or Misery : that God has placed us here for a Time, that we may be *Candidates for Eternity*. Time is allowed us, to consider and answer the *Ends* of our coming into this World ; to dispatch the Errand and finish the Business which our heavenly Father, Lord and Master hath given us to do : To find out and discover the ill Condition and unsound Constitution, the Incurvation and Depression of our Souls ; the Vitiolity, moral Deformity, and wretched *Degeneracy* of  
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our Nature ; the Sickneſs and Weakneſs, Diſorder and Diſtemper of all our Faculties ; the ill Bent, and wrong Biſs, and perverſe Inclination of our Minds and Wills, Hearts and Affections : To obſerve and bewail that lamentable *ἀντρεία*, and unhappy *πνευμάτων*, the hanging and flagging of our Souls Wings, the drooping and moulting of our Souls ; their loſing thoſe noble Feathers by which they ſhould nimbly raiſe themſelves, and fly and ſoar as high as God, and mount up and aſpire to heavenly Things : To be truly ſenſible of, and ſadly affected with the Mutiny and Rebellion of the brutiſh and inferior Faculties of our Souls againſt the higher Power and ſovereign Faculty of our Reason : And to endeavour, what in us lies, by all poſſible means to recover and rectify, to puriſie and ſublimare our Heaven-born Souls ; and to uſe well and rightly our ſeeing and foreſeeing, our intellectual and elective Faculties and Powers : To open and clear the Eye of our Souls, to improve and heighten our Reason, to ripen and ſtrengthen our Judgment, to enlarge and widen our Underſtanding, and to live and act ſuitably and agreeably to right Reason, and the ſober Dictates and moſt mature Judgment of a ſound and ſolid Underſtanding : To conſult the divine Oracles, and ſearch the ſacred Scriptures ; and thence more clearly to gather, and fully to diſcover our ſinful miſerable State by Nature : To learn plainly and certainly from divine Revelation the particular Manner of our Apoſtacy and Deſection, the Univerſality of

our Depravation and Corruption, our Obligation to Punishment for our Transgression and Rebellion, and the ready Way and infallible Means of our happy Recovery and Restitution to the Image and Favour of God : And out of a deep Sense and *Feeling* of all our Sin and Guilt, and spiritual Impotency and Inability, to seek Gods Face and Favour in Christ, to seek his Grace and Strength ; and with Faithfulness and Diligence to *use his Grace*, and *act in his Strength* ; And in the Use of Reason which is Mans proper *Utensil*) and by the *Help of Divine Grace*, to govern our Senses, to tame our wild and extravagant Fancies, to curb our Appetite, to moderate our Affections, to bridle our violent and boisterous Passions, and to keep our Bodies and rebellious Flesh in an orderly Subjection to our Souls. Faithfully to pursue *Principles of Conscience*, and to live strictly under the Power of Principles : To exercise our selves to have alwayes a *Conscience void of Offence both towards God, and towards Men* : To perform a Course of sincere Obedienc to the revealed Will of God, and the good Institutions and excellent Laws of Christ : To make Religion our Work and Business : To be blameless and harmless, to be useful and exemplary in our Stations and Relations : To serve our Generations according to the Will of God : To watch and take all possible Advantages of daily doing and receiving Good ; and by *patient continuance in well-doing* to provide for Honour and Glory and Immortality, and to secure a blessed and happy Eternity.

Time

Time is allotted us for *Proof* and *Trial* of us : And now God looks to see what we will do with it ; He waits to behold how we will improve it : God expects we should make a *wise* and a *good Choice* in it : That we should use the necessary *Means* for the sure obtainment of our desired *End* : That we should *live up to the Ends of Life* ; answer the *Ends* both of our Creation and Redemption : That we should live not merely the *animal*, but chiefly the *rational, angelical, divine* and *spiritual Life* : That we should not live and act at *Random* ; but that we should, in several Instances, and on all Occasions, approve our selves strict *Imitators* and close *Followers* of God and his Son Jesus Christ, faithful *Friends* to God and Religion, *Friends* to our selves and our immortal Souls : That we should *pass the Time of our Sojourning here in Fear* ; That we should be ruled by the *Hopes* and *Fears* of another Life : That we should live as those that have serious and satisfying Apprehensions of the *unseen World* : That we should live and walk in *believing* and *delightful Fore-thoughts* and *Fore-tastes* of the Glory to come : That we should *use this World as if we used it not*, and have our *Conversation in Heaven*, and learn the *Manners* of the heavenly City and celestial Country, and give our Minds to such Pleasures as are most proper to the *other State* : That we should labour by *Heaven moral* (which is an heavenly Frame and Temper, Conversation and Life) to be prepared for *Heaven local*, the Seat and Receptacle of the Blessed ; By en-

ring into an heavenly State, and getting Heaven first into us, to fit our selves to enter into Heaven at last : By becoming the Spiritual Children of Abraham, Followers of Abrahams Faith and Obedience, to be apt to receive our Rest and Repose in *Abrahams Bosom* : That we should unfeignedly *addict* and devote our selves to Goodness, constantly endeavour to *habituate* our selves to true Piety, and real substantial Godliness and Religion ; to attain that *Purity of Heart*, those gracious Affections, those heavenly, divine and *God-like Vertues* ; and to maintain that *Life of Holiness* and Spirituality, which will *suitably qualify*, and make us *meet* for the blessed Vision and Fruition of God, in the heavenly, supernal Kingdom of Glory : Which will *reconcile* our very *Natures* to that perfectly pure and holy State ; dispose and encline us to love, and delight our selves in God ; and frame and fit us to be for ever the blessed Objects of Gods complacential Love : and which will prepare us for the comfortable, delectable Enjoyment of the *Spirits of just Men made perfect*. God now expects that we should do the *Work of Time, in Time* ; That we should *use* the *Price* put into our Hands, and for a certain appointed Time walk with Watchfulness and Circumspection, keep a due *Decorum* in all our Carriages, and act a vertuous, prudent, *commendable Part*, in the Sight of God, Angels, and Men, upon the *Stage* of this lower World, before we be advanced higher, and translated hence into those *Upper-Regions* and glorious Mansions : That

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we should quit our selves like *Men*, and behave our selves like *Christians* in this present State of *Nurture* and *Discipline*, *Trial* and *Probation*; that so vve may be capable of a blessed *Reward*, and an honourable *Retribution* in the other World; and at last may come to be equal to the *Angels of God in Heaven*; *Mat. 22.30. Luke 20.36.* yea, to be like the very blessed Son of God himself, and to enjoy the happy Fellowship of Saints and Angels, and the Company and Sociery of the blessed Trinity, to all Eternity in the unseen and unconceivable Glory.

Our great Creator and wise Governour, when he giveth and continueth Time to us, expects from us, that whatever it cost us, whatever sensual Pleasures we deny our selves, whatever worldly Profit or Honours we refuse or lose, whatever we be put to do or suffer in this World; we very faithfully spend our Life-time in the constant Exercise of right Reason and true Religion, and improve all special Opportunities to our spiritual and eternal Advantages. Time and Opportunity are Talents with which we are intrusted; and therefore they are to be traded with, and not to be hid in a Napkin, much less to be spent and wasted in riotous Living. And the longer Time God gives us, the more Daies, and Weeks, and Months, and Years, and Seasons, and Opportunities he affords us to work the Work of God, to abound in the Work of the Lord, to repent of our Sins, to work out our own Salvation, to do good to others; to be Helpers of their Faith, and Furtherers of their Salva-

Salvation; the *more Advantages* he affords us to these Purposes, the *greater Improvement* he looks for from us: And we find him *complaining* for want of it: Christ says concerning Jezebel, *I gave her Space to repent of her Fornication, and she repented not.* Rev. 2. 21. And he speaks to Jerusalem, even weeping; *If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy Day, the Things which belong unto thy Peace.* Luke 19. 42. And in the Parable, he that planted the Fig-tree in his Vine-yard, *complain'd, Behold, these three Years I come seeking Fruit on this Fig-tree, and find none.* Luke 13. 7. That is the *first Reason*; We must redeem the Time, and whatever it cost us, use and improve it to all possible Advantages to our selves and others, because *our Time and Opportunities are afforded us by God to this very End and Purpose.*

#### *The second Additional Reason.*

We should carefully and faithfully redeem the Time, because *we have all of us lost much Time already.*

It is to be feared, that *some of us* have lost our *whole Time* ever since we came into the World; have stood idle all the Day long hitherto; have done *nothing at all* for God's Glory, or for the Salvation of our own and others Souls: have made *no riddance at all of our Work*, but only made our selves *more Work to do*. There are some, I fear, so far from having finished their Work, that they know not as yet what

Work.

Work they have to do; that are as yet grossly ignorant of the Terms and Conditions of the New Covenant.

And of those that have known and understood them, how few have considered and consented to them, sincerely kept and faithfully perform'd them! How many among us have liv'd in practical Atheism, in habitual Non-attendance upon God, and in a gross Neglect of their future Welfare and eternal Good? liv'd without any *Science* and *Taste* and *Feeling* of God, or of divine Things? lived in a very brutish, sensual, flesh-pleasing Life!

And such of us as have not quite lost our Time, yet *how much* of it have we wasted? how considerable a Part of it have we fool'd and trifled away? Might we not *mind* God and Religion, a State of Immortality, and a glorious Eternity *more* than we have done? How little *Knowledge* have we got of God, how small *Acquaintance* with him? how little *Communion* and Fellowship have we enjoyed with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, through the blessed Spirit? What *Degrees of Affection* do we still retain to the *Things of the World*? which we might have become *more mortified to*, and weaned from. How too too frequently *predominant* and masterly are our *Senses*? how *strong* and impetuous are our *Passions*? how *violent* and unruly are our *Lusts* and *Corruptions*? How *short* and narrow, how flat and low, how *weak* and impotent is our *Reason*? which might have been heightened and improved, widened and



and enlarged, and grown more *strong* and *masculine*, sober and solid. How *infirm* and infantile is our *Faith*? how *feeble* our *Graces*? how *mean* our *Experiences*? how *small* our *Comforts*?

Let's reflect back a little, and seriously consider what Opportunities we have let slip, what Advantages we have lost of *doing* and *receiving good* in the World: Might not we have relieved the Poor, and Christ in the Poor? and visited the Sick, and Christ in the Sick *oftener* than we have done? Might we not have been the happy *Instruments* of *much more good* in the Parishes and Places where we have lived? in composing Differences, and making Peace among our Neighbours, in warning the unruly, awakening, convincing, converting, recovering the Ungodly? Might we not have been as the *Angels* to *Lot*, hastening some out of *Sodom*; and have *saved some with Fear*, *pul-ing them out of the Fire*? Might we not have shined as *Lights*, as *Torches*, as *Stars* in the World? Might we not have been more useful and serviceable, more exemplary and imitable in our Lives, more conscientious in our Dealings, more faithful in our Relations, more strict and holy in our Families than we have been? How well might we have *spared Time* to have instructed our Families, to have catechised our Children and Servants, to have admonished and exhorted one another *more frequently* than we have done? How many *precious Hours* have idly slipped away from us, and run waste, which might have been well bestowed in Reading, Hearing, Prayer,

Prayer, Confession, Meditation, Self-examination, holy Society and Christian Communion? Yea, many a Time, vvhen the holy Spirit of God has *secretly mov'd* and prompted us to perform a particular Duty; When vve have had *somerimes* (though in a more *tacite Way*) such an *hint* as that of St. *Austin's*, was, *Tolle, lege; tolle, lege*; take up the Bible, and read in it; get it into thy Closet, and pray to thy Father in secret; vve have *sinfully diverted*, and sought an Occasion, and studied an Excuse to turn off from it.

The more we have hitherto *neglected* golden Opportunities, the better let us now *improve* them: Have we been *idle* formerly? why novv let's be so much the more *busily* employed. Have vve *liter'd* away a great Part of the Day in the Lord's Vineyard? let us novv *work* so much the *harder*. the remaining Part of the Day, Have we hitherto *stood still*, or *mov'd* but *slowly*? let's now vvith the *Sun rejoyce to run our Race*. Saint Paul had a long Time been out of the Way: but vvhen once he was led into the right Way, he *pressed toward the Mark*: *κατασκοπον διδω* Phil. 3. 14. the very same Word by which he expresseth his former Persecution; *διωξα*; Acts 22. 4. As he eagerly pursued the one, so afterward he as earnestly followed the other: He was as *zealous* in the Practice, as he had been before in the Suppression of Christ's Religion.

It is our Duty to *redsem the Time*, because much Time is *mis-spent* already: 'Tis St. Peter's Argument, that should *no longer live the rest of our*

our Time in the Flesh, to the Lusts of Men, but to the Will of God : For the Time past of our Life, saies he, may suffice us to have wrought the Will of the Gentiles, when we walk'd in lasciviousness, Lusts, Excess of Wine, Revellings, Banquetings, and abominable Idolatries. 1 Pet. 4. 2. 3. We have heretofore done much for Satan, little for God, and God knows, little enough for our own Souls : We have lived to very ill, or to very small Purpose in the World, ever since vve came into the World ; and are at present lamentably behind-hand : Novv then it's high Time for us to lay out our selves to purpose, to lay out our selves to the utmost for God, to be zealous and active for God, and to go about doing good : And it greatly concerns us, to be pious and religious in such Instances, in vvhich vve have formerly been vicious or incurious : and to bestovv our Time especially in the Performance of those Duties, and the Exercise of those Graces, that are contrary to our former sinful Practices, or gross Neglects.

*The third Additional Reason.*

It concerns us highly to redeem the Time, because the Time that remains is very short, and uncertain ; and our special Opportunities far shorter, and more uncertain ; and the Work we have to do, very great.

1. The Time that remains is very short. Our vvhole Life-time is but a very short Space novv, in Comparison of vvhat Men liv'd before the Flood ;

Floud; but a few daies, and those swifter than a Weaver's Shuttle, than a Post or Racer on the Land: They pass away as the swift Ship upon the Sea, as the Eagle that hasteth to the Prey. Our Daies upon Earth are like a Shadow that declineth; that changeth, and is liker Darknes every Moment: like Grass, which in the Morning flourisheth and groweth up, in the Evening is cut down and withereth. We spend our Years like a Tale that is told. Now, if a Tale be pleasant, you know Time passeth away so quickly in the telling of it, that it is scarce perceived either by Speaker or Hearer. Our Life is as a Vapour, a Smoak; 'tis gone presently. Our Daies are as an Handbreadth. The whole of our Life is but a Span; and it may be the Remainder is but an Inch. Our whole Life is but a Day; and it may be we have past the greatest Part of it already, and a few Hours or Moments will serve to measure all that is left behind.

If we look back on our past Years, the longest Life will seem but a short space: and why should we reckon the Remainder by any other Measure? which with many, in the very course of Nature, is but small and short in Comparison of the former. The succeeding Part of our Lives will be gone and quite past over ere we are aware.

It is not so proper to ask, when we shall die? as, when we shall make an End of dying? for surely, we have been dying, ever since we were born: we have been going out of the World, ever since we came into the World. As not only the Sands that fall last of all, but all that run out

out from the very first, do properly empty the *Hou-glass*. So the last *Hoir* in which we cease to be, doth not alone effect, but only finish our Death. *Quicquid ætatis retrò est, mors tenet*, saies Seneca [ Ep. 1. ] : We are dead already to yesterday, and t'other Day, and all the former Daies of our Lives : Death is possess'd of all that is past.

And how does Death seise, as on our Time, so on our Bodies by Degrees? As it is in the Decay of an House, there falls down a Window, then a Peice of a Wall, then a a Door : So 'tis, with the House of this earthly Tabernacle : Death seiseth upon our Teeth, and makes the Grinders cease, because they are few : Eccles. 12. 3. upon our Eyes, and makes us dim-sighted : upon our Ears, and makes us thick of Hearing : upon our Feet and Hands, our Limbs and Joints, and makes them weak and feeble, stiff and cold. We decline and hasten apace to our long Home, and are fitly said to be frail or *ceasing*. Ps. 39. 4. Our Life is short. And, 12, *It is uncertain how short it may be*. Young ones may be snatch'd away in their Childhood or Youth. There were as many Lambs and Kids sacrificed under the Old Law, as Goats and old sheep. They that have escaped in their Youth, may be cut off in the midst of their Daies. The strongest may go as well as the weakest, and the lustiest of all may go soonest. Iron and Brass may melt, as well as Clay molder. Possibly some Fruit may hang on till it's so ripe that it falls and drops down of itself, but most of the Fruit is violently pluckt

of shaken down while it's raw and green. If you go into a Potters Shop, and see a great company of Earthen Pots, and should ask the Owner, which of these would break first? He would tell you, Not that which was first made, but that which first got a Fall. 'Tis common for them to go first to the Winding-sheet, who came last from the Womb. We are Earthen Vessels, brittle Ware, and may quickly get a Knock or Fall, and crack, and break.

How many Persons have lost their Lives by very strange and sad Accidents? Some, and great ones too, have fallen suddenly by an Ebuds Dagger, a Ravilliack or Feltons Knife. A poisoned Torch did serve to light the Cardinal of Lorrain to his long home. Fabius surnamed the Painter, (as a learned Bishop has with variety remarked out of History) was choaked with an Hair in a Mess of Milk. Adrian the fourth with a Flie; Anacreon with a Raisin, Drusus Pompeius with a Pear, Casimir the second, King of Polonia, with a little Draught of Wine; Tarchinius Priscus with a Fish-bone. Lucia, the Sister of Aurelius the Emperour, playing with her little Son, was wounded in her Breast with a Needle, and died. The great Lawyer Baldus playing with a little Dog was bitten upon the Lip, instantly grew mad and perished. So far that great and excellent Author. A little Braise on the Toe is said to have killed *Emilius Lepidus*. I have heard of several that have died by the cutting of a Corn upon their Toe, a Place remote from the

the *Heart*: and have read of a Person, who after sixteen Years Travel, and enduring much Hardness abroad, returning home died of an *Hurt* in his *Thumb*. The plucking but a single *Hair* off the Breast of a Nobleman in the Great *Moguls* Court, caused an incurable *Cancer* in his *Flesh*, and proved as mortal as the tearing out his very *Heart*.

How many Persons have died in the midst of Sport and Merriment, excessive Laughter, and too great a Joy? And what a Number have been found unexpectedly and suddenly dead in their *Beds*?

We are obnoxious to numerous perillous *Diseases*, subject to various violent *Passions*, and exposed to a thousand Casualties and *Contingencies*, any one of which may quickly be the *Death* of us. We are in Danger of perishing by falling into the Water, or into the Fire; by the firing, or fall of some part of an House; by the fall of a Coach, the fall of an Horse, or a fall off an Horse. We know not how soon a *Vein* may break, and let out our Blood and Life: How soon an *Ague* may shake us to Death; as it did the great *Tamerlane*, in the midst of his great Hopes, and greatest Power, when he was preparing for the utter rooting out of the *Ottoman* Family, and the Conquest and Overthrow of the *Greek* Empire. We know not how soon a *Dropsie* may drown us, how soon a *Fever* may burn us up, how soon a *Quincy* may stop our Breath, how soon an *Apoplexy* may bereave us of our Senses and of our Lives, how soon we may

may groan under deadly Gripes, how soon the Pestilence may smite us, and cleave unto us till it has quite consumed us. Every Pore in our Bodies is a Door at which Death may enter in. If we had as many Hands as Hairs on our Heads, they would not be able to stop up all those Passages at which Death may creep in unawares. We know not but that some Disease is now breeding in our Bodies, which will shortly make an End of us. Blessed be God, we are now free from Pain, but ere long we may be even distracted with it. To day we are well, and in good Health ; but to morrow we may be sick, heart-sick, sick unto Death ; and the next Day laid in our Coffins, and lodged in our Graves. Many are gone before us, who were likely enough to outlive us ; and who knows but our turn may be the very next. This Night, mine, thy Soul may be required of us ; and to morrow Morning the Bell may give notice of our Death. We are apt to imagine, that we may continue in the World till we have effected all we design ; and yet we have no Promise of Gods, nothing but our own Presumption to secure us of longer Life. And to be sure, the Greatness and Multitude of our Sins give us Cause to fear the Fenness of our Daies, and Shortness of our Lives: To fear, lest every Sicknes should prove our Death ; and lest our Death should prove our Damnation.

If we consider, how little need God has of us ; how many better than our selves go before us ; how useles and worthless, how unprofitable



profitable and unserviceable we are in the World; what an *high Provocation* our heinous Sins are unto Gods infinite Holiness and Justice; and how *many Waies* there are of snatching us away, and removing us hence; we cannot but confess, that it is a *thousand to one* if ever we reach to an *old Age*.

You that are *old indeed*, have reason to conclude, that your Time is *sufficiently short*: your *Pulse* can beat comparatively but a few Strokes more: your *Sun* draws low, is almost set: your *Glass* is almost run: your Life is almost done: you have *one Foot* in the Grave already: you stand upon the *Brink* of Eternity, and tread upon the *Borders* of another World: And will you be guilty of such prodigious *inconsideracy*, still *velut ex pleno & abundanti perdere*; when you have but a few Daies or Hours remaining, to spend as *extravagantly* as if you had *all* your Years before you?

You that are *weak* and *infirm*, *sickly* and *crasic*, have reason to reckon your Time *uncertain*, and not to *flatter* your selves, and say, that *threatned Folk* live long.

But especially you that are *wilfully wicked* and *impenitent*, have reason to determine that you have *not long* to live. How can you hope, that God should put *another Talent*, and trust a *new Stock* of Time in the Hands of such *Prodigals* as you have been? That he should give such *Rebels* longer Time to affront and dishonour him? That he should *suffer* you to live who *know not how to live*, and care not how you live: who do not understand or consider  
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for what it was you came into the World ? That he should allow you *one Day more*, who never yet *knew* how to spend and improve *any one Day* as ye ought ? You have Ground enough to expect, that the continuing and lengthening out of your Sins will extremely diminish and lessen, curtail and shorten your Daies : You have reason to *fear every Hour* the Loss of your Lives, and of all Possibility of Repentance ; that *you* shall be removed, and room made for *worthier Persons* to stand up in the Places which you so unprofitably and perniciously take up in the World.

Our *Time* is *short*, and therefore let us lay *present hold* upon that *small Remnant* of *hasty Time*, which posseth away whether we work or play.

Let's take with us *Words*, and say to God with the devout Herbert,

O let thy Height of Mercy then  
Compassionate short-breathed Men

Oh ! gently treat  
With thy quick Flow'r, thy momentary Bloom ;  
Whose Life still pressing  
Is one undressing,  
A steady aiming at a Tomb.

Let's daily prepare to die, by earnest importunate Pleading with God for Pardon of Sin, and Sanctification, and Sence of Pardon, and of our Fitness for Heaven and Happiness, that so we may certainly die *safely*, and *comfortably*.

And, by the *Help of God*, let's *double* our Diligence and Activity, and endeavour to do a *great deal of Work* in a *little Time*. You know, *Nature* at the *Approach of Death* usually acts a *double Part*, and puts forth all its Strength. *Bells*, when about *ceasing*, strike *thicker* than before. A *Stone*, the nearer it comes to its *Center*, the *faster* it moves. When *Night* draws on, the *Traveller* mends his *Pace*. Considering we have but a *few Daies*, let's labour to *live them all*, to lose none of them: So to *lead our Life*, that we may be able to *enjoy our past Life*, by making sweet and comfortable *Reflections* upon it; which is in a manner to *enlarge our Age*, and after a sort to *live twice*.

We have but a *little while to live*; let us therefore study and strive to *live well*. Our *Life* is just like a *Comedy* (saies *Seneca*, *Ep.* 7.) it matters not so much *how long*, as *how well* it is acted.

He lives *long*, that lives *well*: who in a few *Years* is very useful and serviceable unto *God*, and greatly profitable and beneficial to the *World*. The Author of the Book of *Wisdom*, says concerning *Enoch*, who was the *shortest liv'd* of the *Patriarchs* before the *Flood*, but an *eminent Pattern* of *Piety*, and a rare *Exemplar* of walking with *God*, that he being *perfected* or *consummated* in a *short Time*, fulfilled a *long Time*. (*Chap.* 4. *Vers.* 13.) For (as the same Author a little before does well express it, *Vers.* 8, 9.) *Honourable Age is not that which standeth in length of Time, nor that which is measured by Number of Years: But Wisdom is*  
the

the gray Hair unto Men, and an unspotted Life is old Age.

Lucilius having in an Epistle to Seneca sadly lamented the immature untimely Death of Metronactes the Philosopher, who might, and in his Conceit, ought to have lived longer : The grave Moralist seasonably checks his causeless unjust Complaint of Providence, and takes Occasion in his Answer to discourse usefully and excellently in this manner ; Our care should be (saies he) not to live long, but to live enough. Life is long, if it be full. What good do eighty Years do him that spends them all idly ? Such a Person did not live, but only linger in Life ; nor did he die late, but was a long Time dead. But you make your moan, that he died young and green : yet he performed the Offices of a good Citizen, a good Friend, a good Son, he was deficient in no part that properly belonged to him. Though his Age was imperfect, his Life was perfect. He liv'd, yea he was here eighty Years, unless you will reckon he liv'd no otherwise than Trees are said to live. I pray thee, my Lucilius, let us endeavour, saies he, that as precious Things, so our Life, though it be not of any great Extent and Length, yet may be of much Weight and Worth : Let us measure it by Work, and not by Time. Wouldst thou know the Difference between him that spent so few, and another that hath passed over many Years ? The one lives even after Death, the other perished before Death. Let us therefore praise him, and place him in the Number of happy Persons, who, how little Time soever he enjoyed, was careful to bestow it well. Why do you inquire

how long he lived ? He liv'd to the Memory and Benefit of Posterity. As there may be a perfect Man in a less Habit of Body, so there may be a perfect Life in a less Measure of Time. Do you demand what is the largest Space of Life ? It is to live till we attain to Wisdom : He that arrives to that, is come not to the longest End, but the greatest, He liv'd not so many Years as he might : *Woe*, a Book may contain but a few Verses, and yet be very laudable and useful.

He that attains the End of Life, though his Time be short, yet his Life is long, because he lives much in a little : Like him that writes small, thick and close, having much to write, and but a little Paper to write in. When the *Ninivites* had but forty Daies allowed them, they made use of that Space to exercise a notable Repentance in.

Our Time is short and very uncertain ; let our Improvement therefore be as speedy, and as great as may be. Let our Care be to live alwaies holily, that we may never fear dying suddenly, nor dread the Thought of being surpris'd and taken unprovided. If we cannot be certain of longer enjoying this present mortal, transitory Life ; Oh let's not be contented to be as uncertain of our obtaining a better being, and an endless Life, when this is concluded and expired.

3. Our special Particular Opportunities are much shorter than our Time, and more uncertain. Though the Stalk remain, the Flower may be gone : Though somewhat of Time may be left, yet Opportunity may be slipt. But this I say,  
Brethren,

Brethren, the *TIME IS SHORT* : 1 Cor. 7. 29. the Word is *συμπαλωσθαι* contracted or shortened. It is an *Allusion* to *Sea faring Men*, that have almost done their Voyage, and begin to *strike Sail* ; are ready to *roll and fold up* their Sails together, to put into Harbour, and to go to unlade their Goods.

Our *special Seasons* are very short, and uncertain Things. We may quickly be laid upon *Sick-Beds*, and unfitted by a *Disease* for the Performance of those Duties, which now we are free to the Exercise of. We may suddenly fall into so weak a Condition, that an earnest Care, and working Thoughts about the final Estate of our Souls, would hinder the Cure and Recovery of our Bodies, and will be apt to be laid aside upon that Pretence. In a Time of *Sickness* our Heads may be distempered, or our Hearts may be straitned, that we cannot pray. We may possibly lose our Estates, that we cannot hereafter give to the Poor so liberally as now we may. It may be for the future we may not be excited and suscitated by such good Motions as now we are. We may never be entrusted with such rich Talents, nor have such precious Opportunities any more afforded us as are at present vouchsafed to us : Let's therefore now improve them to the utmost : Let us make the best of them, and lose none of them : Especially considering, that as our Time is short and uncertain, and our special Opportunities shorter, and more uncertain ; So,

4. The Work we have to do, is very great. 'Tis

*no slight and trifling Work*, above all keepings to keep our *Hearts* : to prevail with our selves to make a *Covenant* with our *Eyes*, and perform it : to turn away our *Eyes* from beholding *Vanity*, and from gazing on alluring *Objects* : to learn *habitually* to govern our *Tongues*; to set a *Watch* over our *Lips*, that we offend not with our *Tongues*, nor speak unadvisedly with our *Lips* : to take heed unto our *Feet*, and to make *streight Paths* : to walk circumspectly, *Eph. 5. 15.* accurately, exactly : to strive to enter in at the *strait Gate*, to watch for our *Souls*, to work out our *Salvation*, to make our *Calling* and *Election* sure : to procure, and preserve a *Right* and *Title* to the heavenly *Kingdom* : to get our *Evidences* for *Heaven* sealed, and to keep them so clear from *Blots* and *Blurs* that they may be plainly read.

It is *no facile Thing* to repent of so many thousand *Sins* and *Follies*, to believe with all our *Hearts*, to obey the several *Laws* and *Commands* of *Christ*, and to discharge and perform our particular respective *Duties* both towards *God*, towards our *Neighbour*, and towards our selves. 'Tis *no such easy matter* to become able to resist the *Devil*, to tread *Satan* under our *Feet* ; to get *Victory* over the *World*, to subdue our own *Flesh*, to deny our selves ; To reach and attain to such a *Degree* of spiritual *Niceness*, as not to endure the *Impurity* of a *Dream*, nor to allow our selves in so much *Anger* as would disorder and disturb a *Child*.

Sin

Sin is not mortified on a *suddain* : Our old Man is not crucified in a *Moment* : The strong Man is not disarm'd and cast out in an *instant* : The Plague of our Heart is not so *soon* cured, our spiritual Leprosie so *quickly* healed, nor our Issue of Blood so *presently* dried up. A corrupt Nature is not so easily changed : Ill Habits and Customs are not so *readily* broken and laid aside : A craving Appetite is not *immediately* drawn off from sensual Objects, nor our Inclinations to the Things below vanquish'd and conquer'd with a *single* and *short* Conflict : Strength is not so *speedily* gotten against Temptations, nor Power over our Passions, nor Conquest obtain'd over our Corruptions. It is not a Thing of so *quick a dispatch* to fix and settle our Resolutions, to remove strong Prejudices, to resolve our Doubts, to answer Objections, and satisfy many weighty and difficult Questions which will arise concerning our Souls and Spiritual Estates. 'Tis a *great Work* sure, Employment and Business enough *for all our Time*, to get a Change of Mind, and Heart, and Life : To get Pardon of Sin, and Purity of Heart ; To recover the Favour and Friendship of God, and to regain the glorious Image and Likeness of God : To procure the Reconciliation of our Persons and Natures to God ; To get a Participation of the Divine Nature, a Participation of Gods Holiness : To attain a blessed Conformity in Spirit and Practice to Christ our Head : To get an affective transformative Knowledge of God and Christ, and a deep



Impress of the holy Gospel upon our Hearts and Lives : To know the Gospel, to know God and Christ so, as to become Gospel-like, God-like, Christ-like Creatures : To gain a good Measure of Grace and Holiness, a rooted Love to God and Goodness, a good Hope and a settled well-grounded Peace of Conscience : To learn to be careful for nothing with an anxious, distrustful, distracting, *dividing* Care ; *Phil.* 4. 6. but in every Estate and Condition of Life to be humbly and cheerfully content : To improve and stir up the several Graces of God in us : By *Gods Assistance* to bring our selves to maintain a daily holy Communion with God, and a constant Conversation in Heaven : to prepare aright for Death and Judgment : to arrive to a Weanedness from this present World, to a Desire to depart and be with Christ, and to a *Love of the appearing*, and an earnest longing for the second Coming of the Lord Jesus.

This *hard Task* and weighty Work will require *all our Labour*, and even take up *every Hour*. Let's therefore vigorously redeem the Time, and industriously put it to *this Use*, and diligently employ it to *this Purpose* ; and daily say the Prayer of *Moses*, *So teach us to number our Daies, that we may apply our Hearts unto Wisdom.* *Psal.* 90. 12. Let's lose none of our little Time upon unfruitful, *unprofitable Things*, till we have no more worthy and weighty Things to spend it in ; and till we have Time to spare from more momentous, important Work : But let's lay out our Time in those  
*necessary*

necessary Works which will comfort us most when we come to die.

The *Work* that lies before us is *great*; let's therefore redeem the *whole* of our remaining Time: redeem it *perfectly* (as far as in us lies) and redeem it *constantly*, to the very last; and not purposely make the good Improvement of one Day an *Argument* of mis-spending and trifling away the next: but lay out every day with Labour and Diligence in so very great and good a Work. If we intend to redeem the Time, we must continue in well-doing: Now a *natural Cessation* of the Act, is not a *moral Discontinuance*; But only our *Omission* of any *necessary* Act, or our Doing a clean *contrary* Act: This is that which we must take Care we do not become guilty of.

We have no reason here to *accuse* and cast any Blame upon God, for giving so *little* Time to us, and expecting so *great* and weighty a Work from us: For, though our Time be *short of it self*, and we have no spare Time to *throw away* in vain Pleasures, or unnecessary Employments. Yet, blessed be God, the Time he gives us is large and long enough to serve all rational spiritual Ends of Life, to do all our *necessary Work* and real Business in, by the *Help of God*, and in the *Strength of Christ*. We have in the Daies of our Lives Space enough given us for Repentance, Time sufficient to dispatch the one Thing necessary to work out our Salvation, to prepare for Eternity.

And for our Comfort and Encouragement,

if we be not grossly wanting to our selves, we may probably *yet reform* whatever is indispensably requir'd of us, in the Time that is continued and lengthned out to us; if we *take up presently* and lose and squander away no more of it. *Life is long enough*, saies Seneca, (and let me add, the Residue of thy Life may prove long enough) *if thou knowest but how to spend it well*: And therefore be so prudent and provident, as to use and improve *that little*, which, if the Fault be not thy own, may happily serve to do thy *main Business*, to save thy Soul from perishing everlastingly, and from miscarrying to all Eternity.

*The fourth Additional Reason.*

We should redeem the Time while we enjoy it, because we can neither bring Time back, when once it is past unimprov'd, nor any way prolong and lengthen out the Daies of our Lives, when Death comes to put an End and Period to them.

1. We should redeem the Time while we have it, because we can never recall and retrieve the Time of this Life, if once we lose and let it slip unimproved. We can never live one Day of our Lives over again. No Man will restore thy Time (saies Seneca) or return thy lost Opportunities to thee, and make thee Master once more of those Advantages which heretofore thou hadst in thy Hands. If we would give the Fruit of our Bodies for the Redemption of our Time, we can never purchase it into our Hands again. It is reported to have been  
the

the Speech of Prince Henry upon his Death-bed to a certain Lord, *Ab, Tom, I now too late wish for these Hours we have spent in vain Recreations.* That of him in the Poet was a very groundless and fruitless Desire,

*O mihi prateritos referat si Jupiter annos !*

*Oh that Jove would me restore  
The Years that I have liv'd before !*

When our Time is just at an End, and we can hardly draw our Breath, 'twill be a lamentable, desperate Case for us then to cry out with that poor distressed, afflicted Woman in Cambridge, *Call Time again, call Time again*: a Thing impossible to be effected by any Cares or Endeavours, Prayers or Tears, Money or Price. The Time of Life, once lost, is irrecoverable and unredeemable; And the *sad Apprehension* of the irreparable Loss of Time, will one Day prove an *intolerable Torment* to too late considering and awakened Souls. Let's therefore use that Time well, which there can be no Revocation of.

2. As we cannot recover the Time that is past, so we cannot make any Supplement or Addition of new and longer Time to the Daies of our Lives, when once Death comes to put a *Finis* to them.

As we cannot add one Cubit to our Stature, So we cannot add one Moment to the Measure and Number of our Daies. St. Gregory in a certain Homily tells us a sad Story of one

*Chrisaureus,*

*Chrisaureus*, a Nobleman, but a *bad Liver* ; as full of *Wickedness* as *Wealth* ; who at last was struck with *Sickness*, and the same Hour that he was going out of the World, he seem'd to see a Company of foul and black *Spirits* standing before him, and coming to drag him to the *Infernal Pit* : He began to tremble, to grow pale, to sweat again, and to call out to his Son *Maximus* to come quickly to save and help him : When his Son and Servants came, they could see *nothing* ; but he himself, turn which way he would, could see *nothing else* but those *evil Spirits* which he could not endure to see ; and in a despairing Manner at last cried out, *Inducias vel usque manè, inducias vel usque manè* : Let me have respite but till to morrow, respite but till to morrow Morning : And in this Perplexity he died immediately. The same *Father* makes this Use of it ; The Vision did him no good, says he, but let it do good to us, upon whom Gods Patience waits yet a while longer : *Let us seriously think upon't, that we may not lose our Time*, says he, *and then beg to live that we may do our Duty, when we are forc'd to die whether we will or no.*

#### The fifth Additional Reason.

We should diligently redeem the Time, because we shall be certainly call'd to an Account for our Time. Eccles. 11. 9. Rejoice, O young Man, in thy Youth, or, because thou art young, healthy and strong (the wise Man here speaks  
Ironically)

*Ironically*) and let thy Heart cheer thee in the Daies of thy Youth, and walk in the Waies of thy Heart, and in the Sight of thine Eyes : take thy Course : do what thou pleasest : live as thou listest : lay no restraint upon thy self: deny thy self nothing that Heart can wish : please thy Eye, gratify thy Phansie, satisfy thy Appetite, and let thy sensual Heart give Law to thy whole Man: take thy Swing, thy Fill of Lust and Pleasure ; get Gain, heap up Riches, acquire Honour, grow great in the World, enjoy thy self, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry ; But take along with thee this sad and severe, yet seasonable *Premonition*, Know thou that for all these Things God will bring thee into Judgment. Know thou, that is, consider and think well of it, till thy Heart be warmed with the Thoughts of it : Let this necessary weighty Doctrine not only enter into, and then slip out of thy Head almost as soon as in it ; but let this Truth take up and dwell in thy Thoughts, and move and stir thy Heart and Affections, and rule and govern thy Life and Actions : Thus know thou, that for all these Things, for all the Vanities and Excesses, Follies and Extravagancies of thy Youth, for all those Things which are now so grateful and delightful to thy Senses ; God, whose Word and Fear thou now despisest, from whose Eye thou canst not hide thy Sins, from whose Tribunal thou canst not absent thy self ; This God will bring thee ; bring thee perforce whether thou wilt or no ; send his Angels to hale and drag thee, when thou shalt in vain call and cry.

cry to Mountains and Rocks to hide thee and cover thee : *Bring thee into Judgment* ; to a particular Judgment immediately after Death ; and to the general Judgment of the great Day ( as St. Jude speaks ) call'd by St. Paul, the *Terror of the Lord*. Thou fond and foolish, thou daring venturous Sinner, know, that there is an After-reckoning, a Time when thou must think and hear of what thou hast done, and left undone, and must surely pay very dear for all. *They that live their Time in the Flesh, to the Lusts of Men* ( says St. Peter ) *they shall give Account to him that is ready to judge the Quick and the Dead.* 1 Pet. 4. 2, 5.

We are as sure to account for every considerable Portion of our Time, as for every Sum of Money we receive. If the very *Hairs* of our *Heads*, and *all our Hairs* are numbered ; Mat. 10. 30. then certainly our very *Hours* and *all our Hours* too : And above all, our *special Hours*, our Sermon-Hours, and all providential Opportunities, with all our Neglects and Non-improvements, are exactly computed and reckoned up by God our Judge. God puts down in his *Catalogue*, this is the *first*, this the *second*, this the *third* time, that I have *warn'd*, that I have *woed* such an one. He strictly observes how long he has waited upon us, how often he has treated with us ; by his Mercies, by his Judgments, by his Word, by his Spirit, by his own Ministers, by our own Consciences, or our Christian Friends. God counts and casts up every *Minute* of Patience spent upon us ; He reckons and registers eve-

ry Sand of Long-suffering run out by us : God now takes special, particular, punctual Notice of all, in order to a future, final, and full Account.

We must one Day reckon for all those Hours which now we idle and trifle away, and make so little and light of. Time is now a *Burthen* to many of us, and lies upon our Hands, and we know not almost how to spend it, or which way to get rid of it : And therefore sometimes we use *evils Arts* to pass it away : But oh what an *intolerable Burthen* will the Guilt of mis-spent Time be, when it shall be charged home upon a Soul at the great and *dreadful Day* ! What have you done with all your Time ? will God then say : Is it true, that you have spent so much in Drinking, so much in Revelling, so much in Dressing your self every Day ? Were these the Things I gave you Time for ? what will the Sinner be able to answer to these Things.

When our righteous Lord, who delivered the *Talents* of Time and manifold *Opportunities* to us, shall come to *reckon* with us, he will require and call for some *answerable* good Improvement of every such Talent : And the *more* of these Talents were concredited and committed to us, the *richer Return* and greater Improvement will be expected and demanded of us : Our *Reckoning* will rise according to the *Large-ness* of our Opportunities and *Receits*.

And the *longer* it is before God calls us to a *Reckoning*, our *Account* will certainly be the *sadder*, and our *Doom* and Punishment much *heavier*



heavier, if we have been *unfaithful Stewards* of our Time and Talents. What Account will the old Sinner give of three or four-score Years spent in Vanity, Sin and Folly? What will he be able to say for himself, that his *gray Hairs* were found in the Way, of *Unrighteousness*.

It will be a *fearful Audit*, when God shall call the inconsiderate, careless Sinner to appear before his great Tribunal: Then he that has but *hid his Talent*, shall hear that sad and dismal Voice, *Serve nequam*; thou wicked and slothful Servant, and shall find and feel a Retribution accordingly: 'Twill surely then be said concerning him, *Cast the unprofitable Servant into outer Darknes, there shall be Weeping and Gnashing of Teeth*. Mat. 25. 26, 30.

O let's not put that evil Day far from us; but let that Voice be alwaies ringing in our Ears, which was ever sounding in St. Jerom's; *Arise ye Dead and come to Judgment*, Our Time must be strictly reckon'd for, and therefore we should thrifely husband, if possible, every Minute of it,

*The sixth and last Additional Reason*

Sixthly and lastly; We should be sure to redeem the Time, *Because this Time is all we can redeem; and upon this short Moment of Time depends long Eternity*.

We shall never have any more Time or Space to redeem, either in *this*, or in another World.

1. As we cannot live this same Life over again, so when once we die and leave this World, we shall never return to this Earth again, to converse in Flesh with Men any more; nor be suffer'd to live another Life here in this World, to mend and correct what we did amiss heretofore. *If a Man die, shall he live again?* says Job: Job 14. 14. Some understand this Interrogation as a flat denial, an absolute Negation: He shall live a natural Life on Earth no more. *As the Cloud is consumed, and vanisheth away: So he that goeth down to the Grave, shall come up no more. He shall return no more to his House, neither shall his Place know him any more.* Job 7. 9. 10. *When a few Years are come, then, I shall go the Way whence I shall not return.* Job 16. 22.

2. And as we shall have no new Time in this, So, no Space will be given, or granted us for Repentance, and Purgation of our Souls; nor will any Offer of Mercy be made us in the other World: No new Covenant will ever there be tendered to us; no Ambassadors of Peace be sent to beseech us, to pray us there in Christ's stead to be reconcil'd to God. God will then be irreconcilable, Sin unpardonable and unremovable, Heaven unattainable, and lost Souls incurable and irrecoverable. If we do not do our best here, we shall have no other Game to play, nor Part to act in any other Region or Mansion. We shall not be Probationers in the other World: We shall not be suffered to begin there up on a new Score. Our Souls at Death will enter into a fixed, unchangeable State, and  
continue

continue for ever such as they went out of this World. The very *same Frame* and Temper, Qualities and Affections, as we carry with us out of this Life, we shall keep and retain in the next. Such good Dispositions as were begun here, will indeed be intended and perfected in Heaven : And such ill Dispositions as took place and got Root here, will be strongly settled and fully confirm'd in the damn'd hereafter : But the main State of any, either good or bad, will never be varied or altered in the other World. As the Tree falls, so it lies : As Time leaves us, so Eternity will find and continue us.

God will never *trie* us more with Opportunities and Helps of Conversion and Reformation, with the Means of Grace and Life, in another Place and State : And therefore let's now improve Providences and Ordinances, Aids and Assistances, as those that shall never hereafter meet with such Advantages ; and do all the Duties and Offices of Religion, as those that are going to that World where there is *no room* for such Performances, *no place* for Confession, Prayer, Repentance and Amendment of Life, in order to the Pardon of our Sins, and Salvation of our Souls : *no occasion* of running, wrestling, striving, watching, fighting any more, in order to obtaining of a Prize, and receiving of a Crown : All that is now left undone, must be undone for ever.

This is the only Space allotted us, and Opportunity afforded us, wherein to build and prepare our Ark, to get Oyl sufficient into our Vessels, and to provide a competent Measure

or

or Portion of *Manna* : We can only gather the *spiritual Manna* in the *six Daies* of this *temporal Life* ; there is no finding, no getting of it on the *Sabbath of Eternity*. As we must do all our *Worldly Business* before the *Weekly Sabbath* comes ; So we must quite finish our *Spiritual Business* in the *Working Daies* of the *Life present* ; for there is no working on the *eternal Sabbath*, when once this *earthly Life* is ended : Then we must labour and work *preparatory Work* no longer, but receive from our great Lord and Master the *Reward* or *Punishment* of our former Works.

The *Life* to come, it is no *Seed Time*, but only a *Time of Harvest* ; We must reap in the future State the *Fruit* of our own present Doings, whether good or Bad. As we do use the *Time* of this *Life*, so shall we be used, treated and dealt with in the other *Life*. We shall certainly fare happily or miserably to all *Eternity*, according to our *Carriage* and *Behaviour* here. According to our *Choice* and *Election*, *Affection* and *Action* in this *World*, will be our everlasting *Lot* in the *World* to come. So that the right *Improving* or *Misimproving*, the well or ill spending and husbanding of our *Time*, is of infinite *Consequence* and *Concernment* to us.

Let us therefore in this *Time of Life* get all Things ready that are necessary to a joyful Entrance into *Eternal Life*. Let our *Work* and *Business*, in Preparation for an endless Happiness, be dispatch'd and done before we go hence, and be no more seen. *Whatsoever*  
our

our Hand findeth to do, let us do it with our might; for there is no *Work*, nor *Device*, nor *Knowledge*, nor *Wisdom* in the *Grave* whither we are going. *Eccles.* 9. 10. There is no *Hope* or *Expectation* of working out our *Salvation* in an *after State* and *Condition*. If this *Work* be not effected before this mortal *Life* is ended, it can never be done in the *Grave*, or *Hell*, or in any *Place* of the separated *Souls* abode. What is to be done of this *Nature*, do *now* or *never* : Act now with the greatest *Care* and *Diligence*, *Life* and *Vigour*.

As *Zeuxis*, a famous *Painter*, once said, *Pingo Aeternitati* : I limn for *Eternity* : So, let us do every *Thing* now for *Eternity* ; and be sure to be very *exact* in our *Actions*, because they must stand upon *Record* for ever, and lay the *Foundation* of our *Happiness* or *Misery* to all *Eternity*. In *Time* let us make *Provision* for *Eternity*. We are careful to provide convenient, handsome *Lodgings* here : But consider, where shall I *dwell* to all *Eternity* ? Remember that a serious *Life* of *Faith* and *Repentance*, *Grace* and *Holiness* here, is the *only Way* to an happy, heavenly, eternal *Life* hereafter : That it is in vain, with *Balaam*, to wish we might *die the Death of the Righteous*, *Numb.* 23. 10. if we refuse to *live the Life of the Righteous* : As *Euchrites* foolishly desired to be *Cræsus vivens*, & *Socrates mortuus* : *Cræsus* while he liv'd, and *Socrates* when he was dead.

## C H A P. V.

*The Use and Application of the Doctrine. Ought we to redeem the Time ? Then (1.) Let not the Men of this World think strange, that serious and conscientious Christians do not lose their Time as desperately as they do. Good Men know the Worth of Time, and understand the great Consequences and weighty Concernments of well or ill husbanding of it. (Use 2.) Let us all examine our selves, and see whether we have redeem'd our Time, or no ; bewail and bemoan our loss of Time. (Use 3.) A seasonable sharp Reproof of several Persons, who are grossly guilty of mis-spending their Time. (1.) A Reproof of these that mis-spend their Time in Idleness and Lazines. Idleness a Sin against our Creation, against our Redemption, against our own Souls, against our Neighbour ; and an Inlet to many other Sins. (2.) Such Persons are justly censurable, who mis-spend their Time in excessive Sleep and Drowsiness ; which wastes not only much of our Time, but the best of our Time too. Immoderate sleeping nought on any Day, but worst of all upon the Lords-day. (3.) Many mis-spend their Time in impertinent Employments. (4.) Many lose much precious Time in vain Thoughts. (5.) In vain Speeches. (6.) In vain Pleasures : in using unlawful, or abusing lawful Recreations : either using them unseasonably, or else immoderately. (7.) In excessive, immoderate, worldly Cares. (8.) Some Persons are to be reprov'd for mis-spending their*

*their Time in Duties. (1.) By performing them unseasonably. (2.) By doing them formally. Time lost in Duties by unseasonable Performance, two Waies : (1.) When one Duty thrusts and justles out another ; and so the Duty is mis-timed. (2.) When Duty is perform'd at such a Time when we are most unfit for't.*

**I** Have done with the *Reasons* of this Duty, and now proceed to the *Use* and Application of this *Doctrine*. (1.) By way of *Caution*. (2.) *Examination*. (3.) *Reproof*. And lastly, *Exhortation*.

*The first Use, by way of Caution.*

Ought we to *redeem the Time* ? Then let not the Men of this World *think strange*, that serious and conscientious Christians *do not run with them into the same Excess of Riot*, 1 Pet. 4. 4. and lose their Time as desperately as they do. There's *good Reason* why the sober, considerate Christian does not slightly and carelessly fling away his Time with others ; For (as *Seneca* speaks of an excellent and eminent good Man) *he does not meet with any Thing worthy to be accepted in exchange for his Time* ; and therefore he keeps and reserves it to be employed to useful and profitable Purposes, and is very saving and *sparing of it*.

The Children and Servants of God do sufficiently know the *Worth* of Time, and plainly understand the great Consequences and weightry

weighty Concernments of well or ill husbanding of it. If they were *wanting* by an early *fore-handed* Care to secure and improve any part of the *Time* that is *past* ; Their *former* prodigal lavishing out their *Time* is the *present* Burthen of their Spirits, and Sadness of their Souls ; And they are resolv'd, by a *timely* Diligence, in a spiritual Manner to *redeem the Time* for the *future*. They often seriously think with themselves, that to lose the *Remainder* of their *Time*, is to lose eternal Happiness, and to incur eternal, intolerable Miserie : Rather *follow* and *imitate* them, than *judge* and *censure* them. If you won't forbear *reproaching* and *reviling* them, know that the *Time* is coming, when you shall give an Account, not only of your *Excess of Riot*, but even of your *hard Speeches* too. 1 *Pet.* 4. 4, 5. *Jude* 15. If any in the Family, if any in the Neighbourhood be more strict, exact and careful to redeem the *Time* than your selves, take heed you do not speak ill of them for it : Do not wonder that they do not do as you do : But as you love your Souls, and as you would give an Account of your *Time* with Joy and not with Grief ; labour, with the holiest and precisest in the Places where you live, to *walk circumspectly*, not as Fools, but as *Wise* ; *redeeming the Time*, because the *Daies are evil*.

The second Use, by way of Examination.

Is it the Duty of a Christian to *redeem the Time* ?



Time ? Then let us *examine* our selves a while, and see whether we have discharg'd our Duty herein. Let us all *look back* on our former Lives, and bewail and bemoan our Loss of Time. How *vainly* have we wish'd oftentimes for a *long Life* ? and yet alwaies neglected a *good Life*. May we not apply that of *Seneca* to our selves ? *It is but a small Part of Life, that we live : The Space we wear out, is not Life, but Time.* We have *been a long Time* in the World, but can we affirm and prove we have *liv'd long* ? Can we be said to have *sail'd much* (to use the Similitude of that most practical *Moralist*) because we have been *tossed very much* in the Sea of this World ? Can we be said to have truly *liv'd*, because some *Cubits* are added to our Stature, because some *Hair* is grown upon our Chin, or because we have *married Wives*, and gotten Children, and it may be raised *good Estates* in the World ? is not that saying of the same excellent *Philosopher* too true concerning too many of us ? *Not Childhood, but, which is more grievous, Childishness remains, and continues still with us : And truly this is yet worse, saies he, that we have the Authority of old Men, and the Vices of very Boyes.*

If as *Alexander* counted his *Life* by *Victories*, not by *Daies*, or *Years* ; So we should reckon our several *Lives* by our *spiritual Victories* and good Works, and our *answering the Ends*, the true Ends and proper Purposes of Life (which is the justest Account, and the rightest Reckoning of our Living). Should not the most  
of

of us find that we have *liv'd* but a *few Daies*, but a *few Hours*? yea, that many have *hardly liv'd at all*, have scarcely as yet *begun to live*? that little or nothing has been done that is truly *worthy of a Man or Christian*?

Have not we been wretched *Scatter-Hours*, and desperate *Prodigals* of our precious Time? We have some of us lived a great while in the World: But the *question* is, Whether yet we have learn'd to know God and Christ, and to know our Selves? To be just and honest, to be modest and chaste, to be sober and temperate; to deny a strong, unruly Appetite; to refuse a superfluous Morsel of Meât, a forbidden intemperate Cup of Drink? Have we learn'd in the *many Years* of our Lives to master and moderate *one Passion*? to subdue and mortify *one Lust*, to break off *one evil Custom*, to root out *one vicious Habit*, to answer *one Objection*, to resist *one Assault*, to defeat *one Art* of the Devil? Who of us have been careful *all this while* to run our Race, to trim our Lamps, and to dress up our Souls for a blessed Eternity?

Did not we spend our *Youth in Vanity*? Which of us was so *forward in good*, as to shun and flie *youthful Lusts*? To how few of us can it be said (as St. Paul said to Timothy) that *from a Child thou hast known the holy Scriptures*? 2 Tim. 3. 15. Tell me, how have many of you desperately omitted, and lamentably neglected the Reading of the *Scriptures* all your Life long, which alone are able to store your Mind with divine Knowledge, and

to make you wise unto Salvation ? What Numbers are there who know but little what is contained in the *Scripture*, any otherwise than as they hear a *Chapter* now and then read in the *Church* ? and God knows too too many give but little heed to it, and so are but little the better for it *then* neither. How few among us, who have liv'd long under the Enjoyment of the Means of Grace, are yet so well acquainted with divine Things, and so well versed and exercised in Religion, as to be able to put up a *pertinent Prayer*, and to commend their own, or another's Case and Condition to God, as *Occasion* does require ? How many *Lords-Daies* have we profan'd ? How many *Sermons* have we wilfully missed ? How many good Opportunities have we negligently lost ? How careless have we been of our own spiritual Good ? How regardless of the eternal Welfare of those who belong to us ? How *ignorant* are many of our *selves* of the Things of God, and of the Duties of Religion ? How far not only from *doing*, but from *understanding* our Spiritual Business ? Who, had we taken Pains, might now have been very *knowing* Christians. How *ignorant*, through our gross Neglect of them, are our Children and Servants, and those about us, in the very *Rudiments* of Religion ? who might have had a good Understanding therein, had we done our Duty in *first* informing our selves, and *then* instructing them. How *ridiculous* and uncomely is it to see an *Old Man* ignorant of his *Letters*, or to seek in his *Primer* ?

But

But how much *more absurd* is it to find so *many Old Men*, who for the Time ought to have been Teachers, yet to have need that one teach them again which be the first Principles of the Oracles of God? *Heb. 5. 12.* Which of us have ever gone about doing and receiving good in the Places where we have a long Time liv'd? Who are we the better for? Who is *spiritually* the better for us? How very *little Good* have we done? Nay, how *much Hurt* have we done in the World? What *Mischief* have many *Parents* and *Masters* done in their *Families* by gross Neglect of *Family-Duties*, such as Reading, Praying, Catechizing; and by their *Looseness* and *Licentiousness* before those that belong unto their *Charge*, whose ungovern'd Youth had more need to be curbed and *restrain'd* by their sober Counsels and seasonable Reproofs, than desperately *misled* and *hurried head-long* by their ill Examples into Sin and Wickedness. Oh what a *sad Consideration* is it, for any of us all to think with our selves, how that for ought we know there may be *some* this Day in *Hell*, who were *occasionally* brought thither by *our* unholy walking and ungodly Living! It may be some of our Friends and Companions, some of our Neighbours and Relations, some of our very Children and Servants are at present in *Hell*, bitterly *exclaiming against us*? and *cursing the Daies* in which they liv'd with us, and were acquainted with us.

Instead of growing *better and better*, are not some of us *worse now* than we were many  
I 2 Years

Years since ? More profane, or Worldly ; more sensual, more hardened from the Fear of the Lord, more without God and Christ in the World, more useless, more unprofitable than ever ? more unfit to live, more unprepared to die *now*, than we found we were many Years ago ? Have not some of us so ill husbanded our Time, that the *older* we have grown, the *less* Hope we have had of Heaven and Happiness ? As *Pius Quintus* is reported by *Cornelius a Lapide* to have said, When I was first of a *Religious Order*, I hoped well of the Salvation of my Soul : But when I was made *Cardinal*, I began to fear it : But since I was created *Pope*, I almost despair of it. How many may be found in like manner, who in their *Youth* have had it may be some reason to *hope* well of themselves ; but in their *Middle Age* more cause to *fear*, and in their *Old Age* almost ground enough to *despair*.

I may here take up the Complaint of the devout *A Kempis* ; *What does it avail us to live long, when we are so little better'd by it ? Ah long Life*, saies he, *does not alwaies mend our Manners ; but does often the more encrease our Crimes. Would we had walked but one Day well in this World ! Many reckon Years of their Conversion ; but there is too often but little sign of a new Conversation.*

Had we not been grossly wanting to our selves, how much might we have known of God, and of his Mind and Meaning in his Word and Works ? How much might we have done for God, and received from God by this Time ?

What

What a Stock of Grace might we have gotten before now ? What a Treasure of Experience might we have heaped up ? What a good Foundation might we have laid of a sound, solid and well-settled Peace and Comfort, to stand us in stead in a Time of Need ? What ground might we have gotten against our Corruptions ? What *Growth in Grace* ? What *Strength in the inner Man* ? What Skill to discern and avoid the Wiles and Snares of the Devil ? What Love to, and Delight in the Law of God ? What Readiness to every good Word and Work ? What Freedom and Enlargedness might we have attained to in Gods Service ? How truly might it have been our very *Meat and Drink* to do the Will of God ; our constant Course, daily Use, and chosen cheerful Exercise, to run the Waies of Gods Commandments ? How forward might we have been in the Way to the Spiritual *Canaan*, who have, it may be, been greatly guilty of many Retrogradations ? How might we have been of *another Spirit* than we are of at present ? How publick-spirited might we have grown ? How zealous for the Glory of God, and the good of Souls ? How active in the Cause of God and Religion ? How careless of the *Pleasures that are but for a Season* ? How spiritual and heavenly-minded ? How ready to die ? How ripe for Heaven ?

O let this Consideration be *laid to Heart* by us, and serve deeply to *humble* us, that we have *had much Time*, but have *redeemed little or none* : That we have liv'd *long* to

*little, to bad Purpose : That we have trifled and squandred away those Seasons of Grace that can never be enjoyed again, and lost those Opportunities that can never return back again. Let us put our selves to the Trial, and bring our selves under Examination, whether we have discharged our Duty in Redeeming the Time, yea, or no.*

*The third Use, by way of Reproof.*

Is every Christian bound to *redeem the Time* ? Then here is a Word of seasonable, serious, *sharp Reproof* to several Persons, who are *grossly guilty* of mis-spending their Time, and divers Waies do foolishly *cut* this precious Commodity *to waste* : Particularly to these following.

*The first Sort of Persons reproved.*

To such as *mis-spēnd their Time in Idleness* ; who lose their Time *nihil agendo*, in doing just nothing, or nothing at all worthy the naming : Who live in Neglect of all *honest and useful* Employment, or do not *sedulously* exercise themselves in the *Duties* of their Place and Calling. How sharply may God reprove, and say to many among us, *Why stand ye here all the Day idle ? Mat. 20. 6.* What Cause have Ministers to complain of their People with the Apostle ? and say, *There are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all. 1 Thess. 3. 11.* To how many may we use

use the Words of the Wise Man? Go to the Ant thou Sluggard. Prov. 6. 6.

1. Idleness is a Sin against a Mans very Creation. God did not so curiously work, and accurately frame us, to sit still and fold our Hands, and give our selves to our ease, and to dream when we are awake. Our Maker intended and fitted us for work. To what End did God furnish us with so many useful Instruments as the several Members of our Bodies, and endow us with those nimble and active Faculties of our Souls, but that we might up and be doing, and vigorously prosecute and pursue some worthy and good End in the diligent Use of fit and proper Means? Adam even in Paradise was not allowed to be idle; but, before he fell, was appointed and ordered to dress the Garden, and to keep the Ground: in which Employment he should have taken Delight, and gain'd Experience.

And afterward when he had sinn'd; not light and easie, but hard and painful, tedious and wearisome Labour was enjoined him, as a perpetual Penance for his Transgression and Offence; and imposed as a Bridle to restrain the Flesh, which by reason of Sin is now become wanton and rebellious against the Spirit: In sorrow shalt thou eat all the Daies of thy Life: In the Sweat of thy Face shalt thou eat thy Bread. Gen. 3. 17, 19. Man, sayes Eliphaz, is born unto Labour, troublesome Labour, Job 5. 7. Man, sayes David, goeth forth to his Work, and to his Labour until the Evening, Psal. 104. 23. This is the Course which God has set him.



But by their *Idleness* Men attempt to overthrow the *Purpose* and *Design* of God, and to frustrate the *End* whereto Man was created; and plainly thwart and contradict, cross and controul Gods *Curse*, while only in the *Sweat* of others *Brows* they eat their *Bread*; and cast off the *Means* which God has ordain'd for repressing and taming the petulant and unruly *Flesh*.

Were these so wise as to accept of the Punishment threatned and inflicted, and to become painful and laborious in their Places and Employments; the *Curse* of God would, by a *Miracle* of the divine *Mercy*, be turn'd into a *Blessing*: For, ordinarily no *Bread* tastes so sweet, as that which is earn'd with hard *Labour* and *Sweat*.

2. Again; *Idleness* is a Sin against our very *Redemption*. 1 Pet. 1. 17, 18. Pass the Time of your sojourning here in fear: forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as Silver and Gold, from your vain Conversation; but with the precious Blood of Christ, &c. This should engage you to walk reverently, strictly and watchfully all your Time. Ye are bought with a Price: 1 Cor. 6. 20. God hath paid dear, given his Son out of his Bosom, for the Purchase of you: Therefore glorifie God in your Body, and in your Spirit, which are Gods. And let's remember Christ gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, and purifie unto himself a peculiar People, zealous of good Works. Tit. 2. 14. He delivered himself up to a shameful Death, on purpose

purpose that he might ransom us out of the Power of Satan, from that course of vicious living in which Men were before engaged, and cleanse us in an eminent manner to be an holy pious People, most diligent to advance to the highest pitch of all Vertue. Christ hath redeemed us to this End, that we might redeem Time for his Service. Why then dost thou stand lasing and loitering, when thou art made and born for Work, and redeemed for Work, and call'd to Work?

3. Farther; Idleness is a Sin against our very Bodies and Souls. It is in a manner the Murder of the Body; for, as the Air and Water, so Mans Body is apt to corrupt and putrify without Motion, Ease destroys the Health of the Body; breeds the Gout and other Diseases. And it hurts and taints the Soul too; and produceth that Indisposition in it, which one fitly calls *Podagram animi*, the Gout of the Soul; and another terms it the *Scurvy* of the Mind. 'Tis highly prejudicial both to our temporal and spiritual Estate. The Man that neglects the means of a temporal Provision, and of his eternal Salvation, through Laziness and Idleness, starves and kills both his Body and Soul, and every way beggareth and impoverisheth himself, in respect to the inward spiritual true Riches of Grace, as well as in reference to outward Enjoyments and Worldly good Things. Without Labour, Industry, and diligent Husbandry, we can neither increase the natural, nor improve the divine Riches of our Souls. There is nothing to be

gotten by *Idleness*, but *Misery* here, and *Hell* hereafter. The idle and slothful Servant is condemned to be cast into outer *Darkness*. *Mat.* 25. 30.

4. Farther yet ; *Idleness* is a *Sin* against our Neighbour. How do they offend against their Neighbours who are wholly unfruitful in their Places, and live as *unprofitably* in their *Health*, as if by *Sickness* they were utterly disabled for any Service ? *Idle Persons* are *superfluous Creatures*, of no Advantage or Benefit to the Body Politick where they live ; and (as *Cicero* sayes of the Swine) have their Souls only instead of *Salt*, to keep their Bodies sweet. They are an unnecessary, intolerable *Burthen* to any Kingdom or *Common-wealth*. It was a pertinent and prudent Question put by *Pharaoh* to *Josephs* Brethren, *Gen.* 47. 3. *What is your Occupation ?* An Interrogation (sayes the learned *Andrew Rivet*) worthy of a *Prince*, who ought not rashly to receive any *Strangers* into his Dominion, without first examining whether they be fit for any good Thing, and know how by some honest Labour to make Provision for themselves and theirs ; that they may neither be burthensome to others, nor living idly take Occasion of doing ill. Hence Wise *Politicians* (as he well urges there) have expressly prohibited *Idleness* by severe *Laws*. The Judges of *Arcopagus* took particular notice of the several Citizens at *Athens*, and strictly enquired in what way of Business every one liv'd, and whether any addicted himself to base and sluggish *Idleness*.  
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The idle Person was made liable to an *Action at Law* ; and he that was once found guilty of Idleness, was, according to *Draco's* old Law, presently branded with *Infamy* : But *Solon* afterward somewhat *mitigated* that Law, and only pronounced him an *infamous* Person who was a *third Time* condemned of Idleness. The *Massilienses* of old denied such Persons Entrance into their City; as were not skilled and versed in some *Art* whereby to get a *lively-hood* : Nor did they admit or allow of *Players, Dancers, Jesters, Jugglers* ; because these Arts do nourish the Idleness of such Spectators, as commonly They call and draw to themselves who *waste* their *Time* in *Toies*. And it was ordained by *Law* among the *Persians* (as the fore-cited *Author* notes out of *Herodotus*) that at the end of every *Year* every Subject should go to the Magistrate to give an *Account* of their *Employment*.

An *idle Body* is plainly guilty of *Injustice* and *Theft*, for he takes and uses the Creatures he has *no right to*, and lives upon others *Labour* and *Industry*. The Apostle commands, That if any would not work, neither should he eat ; that is, at the publick Charge, or at the Cost of any other. 2 *Thess.* 3. 10, 12. And he commands and exhorts such as are idle, that they work, and eat their own Bread : As if it were not their own Bread, if not gotten with the Work of their own Hands, and the Sweat of their own Faces.

So far as we are idle we are *useless* and *grievous* to others, who yet were *born* for the *Good* and *Service* of others.

If we would spend our *Spare-time* in visiting the Sick, in reading to them, and conferring with them; in reproof open, bold Sinners; in comforting afflicted, distressed Consciences; in succouring and assisting tempted Persons; in catechizing, and instructing, and praying with and for our several Families; how many would *rise up and call us blessed, and praise God for us, and pray for us?*

5. Once more; *Idleness* is an Inlet to many other Sins. The Son of Syrach informs us that *Idleness teacheth much Evil.* Ecclus. 33. 27. It is well observ'd by *Parcus*, that if our first Parents had been employed in dressing the Garden according to Gods Command, instead of talking idly with the Serpent, they had not then been seduced unhappily into Sin. How much more, says he, is *Idleness* now to be shunned and avoided by Man! since, out of Paradise, he is every way exposed to the Snares of the Devil, and is by nothing deceived more easily and dangerously than by *sluggish Idleness*.

When *David* was idly walking upon the Roof of his House, Lust quickly kindled at first sight of a pleasing beautiful Object. 2 Sam. 11. 2. An idle Person lies open and exposed to all the Temptations of Satan: Nay he is not only tempted by him, but a Tempter of him. What we find spoken in another Case, *Ezek. 38. 11.* the same may Satan say of idle Persons, *I will go to them that are at rest.* When the Bird sits still, then the Fowler takes his aim, and shoots; but the flying Bird is seldom hurt. Indulge not thy self in *Idleness*, lest Satan take Advan-

rage against thee. 'Tis good Advice that St. Jerom gives thee; *Still be doing some warrantable Work, that the Devil may always find thee well employed.* If thou canst find *nothing* to do thy self, sure enough the Devil will quickly find thee *somewhat* to do: If thou beest once idle, he'll presently employ thee, and set thee a-work. The idle Person has no Defence and Safe-guard against Satan: But he that is lawfully busied is *not at leisure* to attend and listen to Satans Temptations. If Men be *ἄπρακτοι*, such as work not at all, they quickly become *Busy-bodies*: 2 Thess. 3. 11. And if Women be idle, they will be *Wanderers* about from House to House, *Tatlers* also and *Busy-Bodies*, speaking Things which they ought not; 1 Tim. 5. 13. meddling out of their Calling, and enquiring into Things that concern them not: Which Courses and Carriages are the Canker and Rust of Idleness, as Idleness is the Rust of Time. Well then, take this short Lesson from a devout Person; *Be never altogether idle, but still either reading, or writing, or praying, or meditating, or labouring and endeavouring to do somewhat that may be useful and profitable, conducive and ordinable to common Good and Benefit.* Take Example from the Heathen Moralist; *I pass not away one Day in Idleness*, sayes he. When so much *Work* is necessary to be done in so little a Time, or you are for ever certainly *undone*, will you stand as Men that cannot find their Hands?

You that are rich have of all People the least Cause to be idle: God gives you more than

than others, and is there any Reason then that you should do less for God than others, and make your *whole Lives* only a *long Vacation*? Would you think your selves *well fitted*, if those very Servants should presume to do you the *least Work*, to whom you give the *largest Wages*?

Hearken diligently to that sober Counsel, and seasonable Reproof which the holy Mr. Herbert gives you ;

*Fly Idleness, which yet thou canst not fly  
By dressing, mistressing, and Complement.  
If those take up thy Day, the Sun will cry  
Against thee : for his Light was only lent.*

*O England full of Sin, but most of Sloth !  
Spit out thy Phlegm, and fill thy breast with glory:  
Thy Gentry bleats, as if thy native Cloth  
Transfus'd a Sheepishness into thy Story :  
Not that they all are so ; but that the most  
Are gone to Grass, and in the Pasture lost.*

Don't they deserve to be reprov'd who squander away their Time in a *soft and delicate Laziness*? And they too, who though they seem to be full of Employment, yet do nothing at all of the Work of a Man or Christian ; but spend their Time in an *idle Employment*, or in a *serious Idleness*, a *painful Playing*, a *laborious Loitering*, and a *busie doing nothing*.

But surely of all Persons they deserve a severe and cutting Reproof who idle away their  
Time.

Time on the *Lords-Day* : Who usually spend that holy Day as if the *rest of the Ox and Ass* were the only worthy and acceptable Observation of it : When as the *Lords-Day* (as a great and excellent Author sayes well) *was never ordained to give us a Pretence for Idleness, but only to change our Employment from worldly to heavenly, —to take us off from our worldly Business, and to give us Time to attend the Service of God and the need of our Souls.* A Rest from all Worldly Business is commanded, that we may be at leisure for the publick Worship and Service of God, and for the Duties of private Instructing and Praying with our Families, and of secret Closet-Prayer, Reading, Meditating, and the like. A mere Cessation from Labour is not all that is required of us on the *Lords-Day* ; but the Time which Men save from the Works of their Callings they are to lay out on those spiritual Duties.

*The second sort of Persons reprov'd.*

Such Persons are justly censurable who *spend their Time in excessive Sleep and Drowsiness* ; which fills the *Body* full of *Diseases* and ill *Humours*, and strangely dulls the Faculties of the *Soul*, and crosses the *End* of *Mans Creation*, which was to serve God in an *active Obedience* ; and disposes a Person to *Lust* and *Wantonness* ; and wickedly wastes the most precious *Talent* of *Time* ; and not only consumes *much* of our Time, but devoures the *best* of our Time too, eats up the *Flower* of the Day,  
the



the very *first Fruits* of our Hours, even the *Morning-season*, that very Time which of all other is the *fittest* for holy Duties and religious Exercises. Remember and consider what is suggested by the divine *Herbert*,

*God gave thy Soul brave Wings ; put not those  
Feathers*

*Into a Bed, to sleep out all ill Weathers.*

This immoderate Sleeping is *naught* on any Day, but *worst* of all upon the *Lords-Day*. It must needs be much out of any Mans Way to sleep in *Harvest*, and drowse away the *Market-Day* ; and such is the *Lords-Day* in respect of Spiritual and Soul-Advantages. How many Persons are there, that have enough to do, and by *ill Custom* make it a *difficult Thing* to get themselves ready by *Church-time*, and take no Time on the *Lords-Day-Morning* to pray in private, or to pray with their Families ; and so never *prepare themselves to meet their God* in his publick Ordinances, and *beg no Blessing* upon the Word they go to hear ; and therefore God suffers them from Time to Time to go *back* from the Word without any *Blessing*.

Never use to take any more *Sleep* than is *necessary* for the strengthening and refreshing of your frail Natures, the relieving and supporting of your tired and wearied Bodies, and the recruiting and repairing of those Spirits that were wasted and weaken'd by Labour, that so you may be the better enabled  
for

for continued Action and Employment, and fitted for daily Use and Service ; which is the true and proper *End* for which *Sleep* was appointed and *ordained*.

Pay no more than needs must to that craving greedy *Publican* of Time : never yield to its unreasonable *Exactions* : The more you yield to it, the more it will grow upon you : the more Hours you give to Sleep, the more you may. If you sleep too much upon the *Working-Day*, you will be prone to sleep upon the *Lords-Day* too, and that in the *Time* of the very *publick* Ordinance, to sleep when you should be at it, or to sleep even when you are at it, and should be wakeful and attentive under it. How sluggishly and shamefully do many sleep and slumber away *Church-Time*, lie drowsing and dreaming in Bed in the Morning, *folding their Hands* to sleep, or *stretching themselves upon their Beds*, when they should be *lifting up holy Hands*, and humbly *bowing their Knees*, and *striving together* with their Fellow-Christians in the joint *Praiers* of the publick Assembly. And if they make not some trivial *Excuse* to stay at home in the Afternoon, they sit *nodding* and half a sleep at Church, when they should have their Ears and Hearts open to what is publicly read or said. Consider and think thus much with your selves, that if here you spend the greatest part of your Life in *Sleep*, and make the most of your Time nothing but *Night* ; a dark, black and *eternal Night*, without one Moment or Minute of Ease or Rest is reserved for you in another World.

*A third*

*A third Sort of Persons reprov'd.*

Many mis-spēd their Time in impertinent Employments: A Person may throw away his Time as much *alind agendo*, as *nihil agendo*; in doing that which *nothing* concerns him, as by doing *nothing at all*. A Man may lose his Time by *basely* imploying it in mean Affairs, and sordid Business; extremely below the Dignity of his Person, or in acting *contrary* to his own particular Nature and Genius; or by indiscretely engaging in *another's Calling*. For Tradesmen to exercise the sacred Offices of the Ministry, or for Ministers to involve and immerse themselves in worldly Businesses without Necessity, is *mere Mis-spence* and Loss of Time, because it is *going out* of their *particular Calling*, and doing that which nothing belongs to them. A Merchant lays out his Time in the Way of his Profession, and for those Goods which are his particular Merchandise: We must not be *Busie-bodies* in other Mens Matters: St. Peter expressly forbids that. We must abide, and be diligent, and lay out our selves in our own proper and particular Callings, or else we squander away our Time let us be as busie as we will, and the more *busie* we are the more we *lavish* out our Time.

*A fourth Sort of Persons reprov'd.*

How many lose much precious Time in vain and sinful Thoughts? There are they that swallow  
up

up most of our *solitary Hours*. When we are sitting, or walking, or riding alone in the day-time, or waking in the Night or early in the Morning; then do our Minds talk idly with themselves; then do Men wilder away their Time in unsetled independent Thoughts; mis-spent their Time in vain unprofitable Musing, proud self-reflecting, self-admiring and self-applauding, strange and unreasonable projecting; in mere imaginary Suppositions of what they would both be and do; in fond self-flattering Presumptions, and foolish Expectations of Things; in fretting and fuming Thoughts at cross Accidents; in curious searching into other Mens Actions and secret Ends, and studying Things that do not at all concern themselves, and would do them no good at all to know; in evil Surmisings and causeless jealous Workings; in angry revengeful Thoughts and devising Mischief upon their Beds; *Psal*, 36. 4. in lustful, wanton, profane and dissolute Thoughts; in speculative Wickedness, in representing and acting those Sins in their Thoughts which they want Power or Opportunity to put into outward Act, in recalling, revolving, and reviewing in their Thoughts past sinful Actions with a tickling Pleasure and Delight.

If a Man should *write down* his Thoughts but of *one Day*, and *read* them at *Night*, he would reckon himself *half-distracted*, and be greatly amazed at himself: And many a Person would even *blush*, and be quite ashamed to *speake* what he loved to imagine and *muse upon*. These

These idle and evil Thoughts are they that *justle* and shut out serious and favourable thoughts and meditations, and hinder the divine Law and Testimony from being our Meditation all the Day. *Vain Thoughts* too commonly lodge with us : *Jer.* 4. 14. They come into our Minds just as *Travellers* go into an *Inn*, who boldly take up their Chamber there, and command and call for what they would have ? Whereas Thoughts should be suffered to come into our Minds only as Men are permitted to go into a *Garrison*, who are first strictly examined, who they are, whence they come, and what is their Business. We should, with *David*, hate vain Thoughts, *Psal.* 119. 113. call in our vagabond wandring Thoughts and Imaginations, and fix them upon solid and serious Things. *Think nothing* (saies *St. Bernard*) *that may make against thy Salvation :* 'Twas too little to say against it ; I should have said, saies he, *think of nothing beside it.*

#### *A fifth Sort of Persons reprov'd.*

*How very many meerly lose much of their Time in Words ; in pouring out great Floods of Talk, an Ocean of Words without one Drop of Understanding ? Many lose their Words, and lose their Time, in vain Speeches, unprofitable Pratling, frothy Discourting, foolish Babling, toyish and trifling talking and twatling, that tends to no real good in the World. This empty Chat does cheat and cozen us of much of our Time, and is a careless throwing away every Day,*

Day, and almost every Hour of the Day, something of that which ought to be expended for Eternity. How many idly spend their Time in questioning and talking about the Change of the *Moon*, the Alteration or Quality of the *Weather*; or in curious and busie Enquiries about *News*, only out of an *Itch* to know somewhat *new*, or merely to find matter of *Discourse*; and not out of a sincere and earnest Desire to understand how it goes with the *Church of God*, that they may order their Prayers and Praises *suitably* to Gods Providences and Appearances in the World towards his People? How many waste the *Winter Evenings* in telling of Tales, and old Wives Fables, and little insignificant Stories to their Children and Families? when they should employ those *precious Hours* in well acquainting them with the Corruption of their Nature, and the absolute Necessity of real Regeneration, of being born again, born from above: in often informing them of their Sin and Misery, and instructing them in the only Way of Salvation by the meritorious bloody Death and Passion, and the Illuminating sanctifying Spirit, and the healing recovering Grace of Christ.

How many lose their Time by venturing *weakly* to talk of those Things which they are not *in habitu* to discourse of, which they have not well weighed and studied, and are unable to manage a pertinent proper Discourse about? And how do some lose very much of what they speak and take up Time in talking of,  
for

for want of *Observation* and *Accommodation* of their Discourses to the several *Tempers, Faculties, Abilities, Capacities, Conditions* of those with whom they have to do? By which Mens Society might easily be rendred more acceptable to others, and become more profitable both to others and themselves. How many lose their Time and Breath in *Disputing* and wrangling about endless and fruitless Controversies, and unprofitable contending about mere Speculations, or such Practices as have no influence into the bettering or depraving the Souls of Men? How many lavish out their Time and Discourse in meddling *pragmatically* with other Mens Matters that nothing concern them? How many grossly abuse their Time in speaking too freely of *Persons*, when they should only speak of *Things*.?

And here particularly, such Persons deserve to be found fault with, who spend their Time in slandering, detracting, whispering, tale-bearing, speaking *Evil* of others when they have *no lawful Call* to do it: In talking uncharitably of others *Lives* and *Deaths*, in private characterizing, judging, censuring, back-biting of others. These are as perfect in the Enumeration of others Faults, as if their *Memoirs were the Books that shall be opened at the Day of Judgment*. This is in it self a *base Temper* where-ever it is; with the Fly to fasten no where but upon a Sore; like a Cupping-Glass to draw nothing but *corrupt Blood*. This is an *ungodly Humour* for any to suffer their Tongues to be busily meddling with those Sins and

and Miscarriages, Failings or Faults of other Persons, which never grieved and troubled, touched or came near their own Hearts; and which they never secretly bewail'd, and sadly bemoan'd before God: To be continually judging and censuring those that were never privately and personally reprov'd, lovingly and compassionately admonished, nor once earnestly and heartily prayed for by them. This censorious Spirit is a Christless Spirit. Jesus Christ is an Advocate with the Father: He excuses, he pleads for Sinners: he makes the best of every Thing: he covers a multitude of Sins. Now when we do nothing but rip open, and aggravate others Faults behind their backs, we are far from an Imitation of Christ: This is so far from being a Christ-like, that it is too evidently a Diabolical Spirit: The Devil, he is called an Accuser; and we plainly play Satans Part, and act him to the Life, and spend our Time just as the Devil does, if we make it our Business to be ever prying and finding of Faults, to be alwayes bringing Charges against, and framing Accusations of others. And the employing our Time thus is far from redeeming it. Might not we spend our Time far better in meekly admonishing of others, and in heartily praying for others, than in rashly judging and censuring of others? Let me tell you, while we are alwaies pleading others guilty, we do but make our selves more guilty: and thus to lose our own Innocency, is this to redeem our Time? To render our selves incapable of Heaven, is this



this to work out our own Salvation ? *Psal.* 15. 1, 2. *Lord, who shall abide in thy Tabernacle ? who shall dwell in thy holy Hill ? he that back-biteth not with his Tongue, nor doeth Evil [Wrong, Hurt or Injury] to his Neighbour, [in this way of backbiting] nor taketh up [that is, with his Mouth ; that uttereth not] a Reproach against his Neighbour :* that does not curiously pry into the Businesses, Affairs, Infirmities, secrets of others, and then busily divulge and tell them abroad to other Persons ; thereby defaming, disgracing, disparaging and rendring Men contemptible one to another ; and stirring up Strife, Hatred, Enmity, Division and Quarrels among Men. Where shall we now find the Christian who deserves the Commendation that once *St. Jerome* gave of *Asella*, of whom he saies, *Sermo silens, & silentium loquens ;* she was silent when she spake, for she spake only of religious and necessary Things, not meddling with others Persons or Fame. How do many mis-spence their Time and talk in vain and ridiculous *Self-gloriation*, and in uncomely affected, if not false and ungrounded Commendation of themselves ? In complementing and flattering great Sinners to their very Faces ? And some very vile and wicked Wretches abuse their Time and Tongues in speaking a multitude of Lies, in frequent taking Gods Name in vain, in common and customary Swearing, in mingling horrid and bitter Imprecations with their sportive Talk, and making the Wounds and Blood of God, and other such sad Words their foolish or peevish Modes of speaking ?

Many

Many Mens Mouths run, like an *Issue*, nothing but *Putrefaction* : They vent and pour out *putrid*, unfavoury, rotten, *filthy* Discourse, *Eph. 4. 29. Coloss. 3. 8.* apt only to *minister* to a *Vice*, instead of *ministring* Grace unto the *Hearers* : *Corrupt it self*, and tending to *corrupt* good *Manners*, and to infect the *Fancies* and defile the *Minds* of those that hear it. They pass the *Time* in uttering wanton, loose, lascivious *Words* ; in singing amorous and *obscene* *Songs* ; whereas he that is *merry* should sing *Psalms. James 5. 13.*

Many mis-spend their *Hours* in *inconvenient*, *Eph. 5. 4.* scurrilous, immodest ; yea, many mis-spend them in impious and *profane* *Jesting* : in openly *Scoffing* at good Men, and making merry with their *Imperfections*, and their own *Slanders* ; and in *jeering* the holy *Waies*, and playing with the holy *Word* of *God*. He that makes a *Jest* of the *Words* of *Scripture*, or of holy *Things*, (as a learned Pen richly expresses it) *plaies with Thunder*, and *kisses the Mouth* of a *Canon*, just as it belches *Fire* and *Death* ; he *stakes Heaven* at *spurn point*, and *trips Cross* and *Pile* whether ever he shall see the *Face* of *God* or no ; he *laughs* at *Damnation*, while he had rather lose *God*, than lose his *Jest* ; nay (which is the *Horreur* of all) he makes a *Jest* of *God* himself ; and the *Spirit* of the *Father* and the *Son* to become *ridiculous*. And is not this a monitrous cursed *Improvement* of *precious* *Time*, to use and employ it in *profanely* *deriding*, and *desperately* *abusing* the *Word* and *Spirit* of *God* that gave it ? 'Tis a good Saying

of the Reverend Bp. Davenant, *Their Madneſs is to be deteſted and abominated, who know not how to be cheerful and merry, without doing Diſgrace and Diſhonour to Chriſt, and putting a Mock and Scorn on Religion.* Mr. Herbert plainly tells you their Doom ;

*None ſhall in Hell ſuch bitter Pangs endure  
As thoſe who mock at Gods way of Salvation.  
Whom Oyl and Balfams kill, what Salve can cure?  
They drink with Greedineſs a full Damnation,*

How few of us all have ordinarily been conſiderate and watchful, wiſe and material, uſeful and prudent in our Diſcourſes ; and have frequently uſed our *Tongues* as *Inſtruments* of Piety, and ſpiritual Charity ; of the Glorification of our Creator and Redeemer, and the neceſſary Edification, and Soul-advantage of our Brethren ? How ſeldom has our Speech been deſign'd and directed to the real Profit, and beſt Benefit of our Neighbour ? and our Communication been ſo ordered and managed by us, that it might be apt to *inſtruct the Ignorant, to ſtrengthen the Weak, to recal the Wanderer, to reſtrain the Vicious, to comfort the Diſconſolate, and to afford a reaſonable Word to every Mans Neceſſity ?*

Where is the Man, whoſe Tongue is as choice Silver ? Prov. 10. 20. whoſe Words are of real Worth and great Price : in whoſe Lips Wiſdom is found, ver. 13. whoſe Lips of Knowledge diſperſe Knowledge, Prov. 14. 7. and 15. 7. and feed many ; Prov. 10. 21. the Words

Words of whole Mouth are gracious, *Eccles.* 10. 12. whose Lips know what is acceptable, *Prov.* 10. 32. whose Tongue is Health, *ch.* 12. 18. whose Mouth is a Well of Life, *ch.* 10. 11. whose wholesome Tongue is a Tree of Life; *ch.* 15. 4. whose instructive Speeches, and edifying Discourses, and warm affectionate Converses have happily helped others to Life? Where is the Man who speaketh Words in due Season, *ver.* 23. whose Words are pleasant words, *ver.* 26. grateful to God and good Men? Where is the Woman that openeth her Mouth with Wisdom, and in whose Tongue is the Law of Kindness; *ch.* 31. 26. or, gracious Instruction; or, serious Discourse to Children and Servants of the Word of God and holy Things? Oh how many Men and Women are there who have not a savoury gracious Speech in the whole Day, or Week, or Month, or Year, no not in their whole Lives! We may complain of the constant Discourses of most Persons in the Words of *St. Bernard*; Not a Word of Scripture drops from them: nothing relating to the eternal Salvation of Mens Souls can be heard among them: nothing but toying and laughing, and light and frothy talking takes up their Time.

Mens Communications are generally so unprofitable, and so corrupt, that the Consideration hereof made a contemplative Person cry out, *As often as I have gone among Men, I have return'd the less Man*: And drew these Words from another devout Person, *I wish I had oftener held my Tongue, would I had not so*

frequently gone into Company ! But why do we so willingly talk and converse together ; sayes he, when, if we talk any thing long, we rarely come off without loss, and seldom give over communing together without some Hurt first done to our own Consciences.

We have all of us often offended in Word ; not remembring and considering that even of every idle Word that Men shall speak, they shall give Account in the Day of Judgment : Matth. 12. 36. And that (as a learned Bishop clears the Text) the Judgment then shall fall upon our Words, if not upon our Persons ; the Fire shall consume such Hay and Stubble ; and though the Person himself escape, he shall sustain and suffer that Loss : We shall have no Honour, no fair Return for idle, useless, unprofitable Discourses, but they shall with Loss and Prejudice be rejected and cast away.

And therefore take St. Bernards Caution, *Let no Man count it a light matter to spend valuable Portions of his precious Time in idle words : And labour to imitate the ancient Christians, of whom Tertullian gives this Character, They discourse as those that well know that God hears every Word they say.*

Henceforth let us have a care of our words : let us give our voice to Wisdom, ever speak to some useful profitable Purposes, and on all just and fit Occasions, open our Mouths with boldness in the Cause of God and Goodness ; and spend as much of our Time, and as many of our Words as prudently may be, in matters of Religion, in Prayers and Praises and pious Discourses,

courses, in aptly accommodating and seasonably producing the wise and weighty Sayings of Scripture and holy Men, and in taking Occasion from ordinary Occurrences to raise and promote spiritual Discourses.

*A sixth Sort of Persons reprov'd.*

Such do justly fall under severe Censure, who *profusely spend their Time in vain Pleasures.*

1. In Curiosity about dressing and trimming the Body.
2. In making dainty Provision for the Belly.
3. In Play and Sport and vain Recreations.

1. How do the brave Gallants and gaudy People of the Times, sordidly use their Souls as so many Taylors, setting them to mind every new Fashion; and very unmanly spend their Time in over-nice and too curious decking and dressing of the Body, and powdering of the Hair? (the Powder quite forgetting the Dust) losing their Time *inter pectinem speculamina occupati* (to use Seneca's Expression) by being wholly taken up between the Comb and the Glass. These are so exceedingly concern'd for their Heads of Hair, or for the Periwigs they wear, that (to speak in the Words of the fore-mentioned Philosopher) they had rather that a whole Common wealth should be troubled and disturbed, than that their well-set Hair should be disordered and discompos'd, and more affect to be neat and fine, spruce and trim, than to be truly good and honest.

And how do too many of the *other Sex*, instead of early looking up to Heaven in Prayer, and looking diligently into the perfect Law of Liberty, lift up their *Morning-Eyes* to nothing but a *Looking-Glass*, and there contemplate their Faces, and garish wanton Dresses; for several Hours together, and even *worship* their own *Image*, and fall in *Love* with their own *Shadow*; and please themselves to think, how the Eyes of others will be drawn to gaze, and be pleased with looking upon them? These *gentile Sinners* ordinarily spend the most of their Time *before Dinner* in the Arts and *Labours* of *Attire*, in putting on their Bulls and Towers; many in *patching*, and too many in *painting* their Faces, and giving themselves *another Colour* and Complexion than ever their *Maker* thought good to give them; in making themselves a *new Face*, instead of making themselves a *new Heart*: When as these *idly busie* Persons might spend their Hours a great deal better in the trimming of their Souls, and adorning their *inner, hidden Man*, 1 Pet. 3. 4. and making themselves all glorious within; in *putting on the Lord Jesus Christ*, in putting on Christian Charity, and clothing themselves with Gospel-Humility, and with the Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit, and in beautifying themselves with all the Graces of the holy Spirit.

2. How much Time do many spend in contriving how to furnish their Tables, to mix their Meats, to fill and garnish out variety of Dishes, to prepare and order their several  
Sauces;

Sauces ; in the pleasing of their Palates, the pampering of their Fleih, and the strengthening of their Lusts ; in immoderate Eating, riotous Feasting, frequent Junketing ; in excessive Drinking, tarrying long at the Wine, or sitting long Tipling at the Ale-house ? How many suffer Sensuality and Luxury to eat up their Time, and make no greater Improvement of their Years than to become *accomplished Epicures* ?

How do such *Voluptuaries* make their Souls *Cooks* to look out Provisions for their *Bodies* ; imploying their *Minds* in studying and devising *Meats* for their *Bellies* ? How do these live as if the *Business* of their Lives were to please and serve, to gratify and satisfy the *Flesh* ? as if they were made for no higher than the mere *animal Life* ? as if they received their *rational Souls* only to procure for, and to animate the *Organs* of their *Sensuality* ? as if they were born for nothing else but to cloath and feed, to purvey and provide, to cark and care for this *vile Body*, and were capable of enjoying no nobler Pleasures or higher Satisfaction than the Entertainment of their *Senses* ? Though the Truth of it is, that sensual Pleasure (as *Seneca* well discourses) is but the Good of a *Beast*. Canst thou reckon him, I will not say among Men, but Mankind, sayes he, whose Life too plainly shews that he placeth his Happiness and Chief Good in Tastes, and Colours, and Scents ? Let him depart out of this goodly Rank and Order of Creatures that are next unto the Gods themselves ; let him even go among the brute



*Beasts, who is a Creature so much pleased and delighted in the Enjoyment of his Food.*

How few do eat and drink, not merely with an Intention to preserve the Body in Health and Strength ; but with such Prudence, Care and Caution, as not to over-cheerish and pamper, to embolden and enrage their Bodies ; to stiffen and weaken, to clog and enslave their Minds to Sense ; and to inflame and provoke themselves to Lust and Wantonness ? How few do use the Creatures in such sober and moderate Measures, as may render their Bodies tame and governable, morigerous and obsequious to their Souls, and cheerful and ready in the exercise of any religious Duty ? which is certainly the true Notion of Gospel-Temperance.

3. They also are here to be reprov'd, who not only consume much of their Time in Dressing and Tiring, Eating and Drinking, but *lavish out a considerable Portion of it in pleasurable Sports and Recreations.* These are they, who *Bellerophon-like* hotly spur on a flying Horse ; study to drive away that Time, which halteth, and posteth, and flyeth away too fast of it self : And are of a like Mind with that Persian King, who propos'd a great Reward to any that could invent and find out any new Pastime.

These Men waste and wear out their Time, either

(1.) By using unlawful Recreations, which have somewhat of Sin in them, something or other dishonourable to God, or injurious to their Neighbour. Or

Or else, (2.) By *abusing* lawful Recreations; either using them *unseasonably*, or else *immoderately*.

(1.) *Unseasonably*. We should never take any Diversion at such a Time, when any *necessary* Duty toward God, that we are capable of, will be *neglected* by so doing. Again; We should never use any *Recreation*, but only to fit and *whet* our selves for *Business* and Employment. We should not begin to *play*, till *need* of Body or Mind require it: And therefore *labour* must ordinarily go *before* Recreation, and Recreation must follow after it, as a needful Refreshment of weak Nature after Weariness, to *fit* and enable any Person for *fresh* and future Employment, and a cheerful returning to farther Labour and Pains-taking in his particular lawful Calling. *Cicero* sayes well, We may use Recreation and Play, *as we do Sleep and other Kinds of Rest*, when first we have given due Attendance to weighty and serious Things.

Farther, (2.) As Time is lost by *unseasonable*, so, by *immoderate* Recreation. The Earth is a Place for Labour and Industry; We were not put here as the *Leviathan* into the Sea, to take our Fill of Pleasure and Sport.

But how many spend their Time *immensurably* in Mirth and Mollity, *Job* 21. 13. Singing and Dancing, Frolicking and Sporting, Gaming and Playing at Cards and Dice, or in frequent going and long sitting to see *Stage-Plaies*? A learned Bishop expresses himself excellently well to this Purpose: *Men reckon,*

sayes he, that there are none but Play-Daies in their Life, and they can find never a Working-Day among them. All their Daies in their Calendar are Festivals: And they are so far from minding the Business of Life, viz. dressing up their Souls for God in a blessed Eternity by Religion and Holiness, that a Saint should have no Respect from many that pretend to honour him, were it not that he gets them leave to play more freely. The whole Course of their Lives is but a sporting Business, and when they lay aside their worldly Affairs, it is but to obtain Leisure to be more frolick.

To plead that such and such Recreations as you use immoderately, are in themselves simply lawful; is an Excuse that will never be admitted and accepted by God, when in the mean Time you neglect your necessary weighty Work and Employment. Surely you would never suffer your own Servants so to put off their gross Carelessness of important Business that requires greatest Hasten and Speed.

'Tis a notable Saying of Cicero, He is not worthy the Name of a Man, that would chuse to spend one whole Day in sensual corporeal Pleasure: Surely then he less deserves the Name of a Christian, who by his good VVill would live all his Daies, and spend all his Years in taking his Pleasure and Recreation; preferring the Pleasures of Sense, the Entertainments of the Phanſie, and the Recreations of the Body, before the rational Manly Pleasures, the delightful Exercises, and the solid Refreshment and Satisfaction of the Mind: VVhereas in  
the

the Judgment and Experience of the wisest and best Men, there is no greater Pleasure in the World than a generous holy Contempt, and rational religious Disdain of excessive sensual Pleasures.

A Life of Recreation is an absurd and ridiculous Thing ; to make that our constant Business, which should only fit us for Business. For a Man to make mere Recreations his main Actions and grand Employments, is full as foolish and unreasonable, as if he should make all his Diet of Physick or Sauces, and his whole Garment of nothing but Fringes..

As we must not begin with Recreation in the first Place, so, when we take it, we must not hold and continue it too long.

It may seem a severe Rule, but well deserves our very serious Consideration, that the Worthy Mr. *Wately* has given us to direct us in this Particular : 'Tis not lawful for a man, sayes he, in an ordinary Course, to spend more Time in any Recreation, than he has or shall that very Day spend and employ in some Godly, and chiefly private religious Exercise. The Reason he gives is this ; We must first seek the Kingdom of God, and his Righteousness, *Matth. 6. 33.* [first in respect of Time; and first in respect of Affection ; primarily, and principally.] Now he that does so, can never use to bestow more Time in any Recreation whatsoever, than in those Things which do directly make for the obtaining of eternal Life, and that Righteousness which will certainly bring one thereunto. — And surely,

this

this is a most *equal* Thing, that the *most need-ful Duty* should have the *most Time* bestowed upon it. How very *faulty* then are many, that spend *whole Daies* and *Nights* at Cards and Dice, and in idle Pas-times, who never allotted *one Hour* of any *one Day*, to be spent in *secret*, in that *main Work* and principal Employment, for which *all their Life-time* was allowed them ?

Take heed of *giving* too much of your Time to any Recreations : You may quickly lose, not only your *Time*, but your *Hearts* too, in *immoderate* Recreations ; and may thereby so hugely unfit and *indispose* your selves for *Duty*, that you may find it an *hard Task* and difficult Work, to bring *back* your Hearts to their *usual Temper* and wonted Frame again : As *School Boys*, after a *Breaking up* or Time of any extraordinary Play, have *much ado* to *settle*, and fall hard and close to their Books again.

Some good men have been so *tender*, that they have blamed themselves for the Use of those Recreations, which are *apt* to consume and devour, to eat and swallow up *too much Time* : And the *Remembrance* of Time mispent in immoderate Recreations, has been no small Trouble nor light Burthen to the *considering Minds* and *sensible Spirits* of some very holy and eminent Christians. I find in Mr. Fox his *Acts and Monuments*, that *John Huss*, a famous *Reformer* and worthy *Martyr*, in his last Letter wrote in his Imprisonment to one Mr. Martin, has these Words ; *You know how*  
before

before my Priesthood (which grieveth me now) I have delighted to play often-times at Chess, and have neglected my Time, and unhappily provoked both my self and others to Anger many Times by that Play: Wherefore besides other my innumerable Faults, for this also I desire you to invocate the Mercy of the Lord, that he will pardon me.

If the Recreation you use be lawful, seasonable, moderate, then you are certainly well employed, and never trouble and torment your selves with the Thoughts that you might be better employed; for (as one sayes truly) if we were alwaies bound to do that which is best, we could never tell whether we pleased God or no; but should be engag'd and involv'd in needless Jealousies, perpetual Fears and endless Doubts

And here moreover, without making it a distinct Head of Discourse, I think among vain Recreations I may well reckon idle and needless, fruitless and unprofitable Visits. Man indeed is a sociable Creature, made and fitted for Converse; And the Comfort and Pleasure of humane Life does much consist in the desirable Enjoyment of the Familiarity and Society of prudent, discreet, Christian Friends; And great Advantages are to be given and gotten by wise and good Discourses; And due Respects, and civil Kindnesses are to be paid to Friends and Neighbours; and all Occasions and Opportunities to be taken and chosen of doing any considerable good Offices to them, either in respect of their Souls, or Bodies, or Estates. But (as Seneca complains)

*we vainly spend and wear out our selves one upon another : This Man waits upon one, that Man upon another ; but no Man gives diligent and due Attendance upon himself.*

And I fear there are too many to be met with, whose Feet abide not in their own House, (as the wise Man speaks, Prov. 7. 11.) that wander about from House to House, being Tattlers, and Busie-bodies, speaking Things which they ought not (which is the Character the Apostle gives of them, 1 Tim. 5. 13.) who go from Place to Place to spread any flying Report or Rumour, to carry any uncertain and unconcerning News, and (if they may be so happy) to tell the first Story of some little Accidents and petty Circumstances of Things : who run here and there out of a gossiping tatling Temper, or a pragmatical prying Humour, and a greedy Desire to make Observations of the Affairs and Concerns of other Folks Families ; Or to shew their own Dresses and Tires, and to see the new Fashions of others ; Or to drink, or game and play away several Hours of the Day. There are too many that are weary of their Time, and weary of themselves, and hate the Work and Employment they are called to in their Families, and the Exercises of Devotion that should be used in their private Closets ; and gad abroad for a Diversion from Duty, for the prevention of melancholick Self-reflection, and for avoiding or drowning the disquieting Clamours, and troublesome Noises of their own guilty and stirring Consciences : These weary and tire out their  
Neighbours,

Neighbours, that they may not be a *Burthen* at home to themselves: never remembering, or not considering that sober Advice and solid Counsel of the wise Man, *Prov. 25. 17 With-draw thy Foot from thy Neighbours House : lest he be weary of thee, and so hate thee.*

But alas how few amongst us are to be found, who make their Visits to these *better Purposes*, to help and assist, counsel and comfort sick Persons; to exercise Charity to the Souls and Bodies of poor Neighbours, to minister suitable and seasonable Relief to such as are in real and great want and Need; to further the Edification, and promote the Salvation of all about them; to labour and endeavour to bring some from their Errours or Sins; to mind one another of their latter End; in a serious and savoury Manner to talk of the Kingdom, and the way to the Kingdom, and to help one another Heaven-ward; to add to one anothers spiritual Knowledge, to encrease and stir up on another's Graces, to comfort and warm and strengthen one anothers Hearts; to affect one another with the Remembrance of God's Ordinances, and with the Consideration of his Providence, to their Persons, Families, Relations, more *particular*; or to the Land of our Nativity, and the People of God and Church of Christ, more *generally*; To bring one another to a due Sense of the Divine Mercies, and to a dread of the Divine Judgment; to pray with one another, and quicken one another to a reformation of their Hearts and Lives, and a well ordering of them-



themselves and Families, and the Redemption of their Time in these evil Days and to a speedy and sound Preparation of themselves to suffer for the Gospel, and for the Purity of the reformed Religion, if God shall please to call them to it ?

That *Prodigy* of early youthful Piety, and spiritual divine Proficiency ; Mr. *John Fancway*, Fellow of *Kings Colledge* in *Cambridge*, once in Company sat down silent, took out his Pen and Ink, and wrote down in short-hand the Discourses that passed for some time together, amongst those that pretended to more than common Understanding in the things of God ; and after a while he took his Paper and read it to them, and asked them, *Whether that talk was such as they would be willing God should record ? Is not this a brave rational divine Discourse* (saies he) *Where's our Love to God, and Souls, all this while ? Where's our Sense of the Preciousness of Time, and of the Greatness of our Account ? Did Saints in former Times use their Tongues to no better Purpose ? Would Enoch, David, or Paul, have talked thus ? Is this the sweetest Communion of Saints upon Earth ? How shall we do to spend Eternity in the Praises of God, if we cannot find some good matter for an Hours Discourse ?* This he did to convince, and shame them out of their barren Discourse, and empty Converse, and foolish fruitless Communication, and to quicken and provoke them to a more profitable Improvement of their Society.

And thus he did to convince, and shame them out of their barren Discourse, and empty Converse, and foolish fruitless Communication, and to quicken and provoke them to a more profitable Improvement of their Society.

*A seventh sort of Persons reprov'd.*

They also are justly blame-worthy who cast away their Time in excessive, immoderate, worldly Cares for superfluous Things? Who (as the Philosopher describes them) do wholly pass their Life in seeking and Procuring the Instruments of Life; and are soeoner weary of living, than of labouring; whose desire lasts longer than their Ability, and Power to labour for this World; who reckon O'd Age greivous only on this Account, that it laics them aside, and hinders their lively and vigorous Pursuit of the things of the World; Who complain sometimes of the Trouble of businets, of the Weight of great and full Employments, but cannot find in their Hearts to leave them, because though they hate the Miseries of their Labours, yet they love the Gain and Profit, the Price and Reward of them.

Who bestow a great Deal of Pains about that they never intend to use; Who toil and sweat, tire and weary out themselves to heap up Silver and Gold, to join House to House, and lay Field to Field, Isa. 5. 8. all which they must shortly exchange for a Turf in the Church-yard: Who anxiously labour to raise and gather, to clear & secure an Estate, which they must, every Man of them, leave unto the Man that shall be after them, and none knows whether he shall be a wise man or a fool; Eccl. 2. 18. and take no pains in the mean Time to try and confirm their Title to Heaven: Who are so solicitous about plowing their Grounds, that they cannot break up the  
Fallow

*Fallow Ground* of their own Hearts : *Jer. 4. 3.* Who are so busy in making up their *Accounts with Men*, that they mind not the making even their *Accounts with God*; So over-careful to improve their *temporal*, that they neglect the Improvement of their *spiritual* Estates: Who are like *Martha* : so cumbred and troubled about many things, that they are ready to forget the one only Thing which is absolutely necessary, the happy Choice of that good Part or Portion, which would be very acceptable to God, and the Advantage of which would continue to themselves to all Eternity : *Luke 10. 40, 41, 42.* Who are so taken up with *worldly Dealings*, that they have little or none of their *Conversacion in Heaven*: Who say in their Hearts what *Duke de Alva* once replied to the King, who asked him whether he had seen the *Eclipse* of the *Sun*; that he had so much *Business* to do upon *Earth*, that he had no time to look up to *Heaven*: Who are more studious and indutrious to get a good *earthly Bargain*, than to obtain a *Crown of Righteousness*, a *Crown of Life and Glory*, and to make sure of an *heavenly* and everlasting *Kingdom*: Who have their *Hearts* as full of the *World* as their *Hands*, and are so covetous and greedy of it, that they will lose their Time and let go God and a good Conscience for it: Who suffer their worldly Employments too often and easily to steal away their set and stated Times for Reading, Praier, Confession, Thanksgiving Meditation, Self-Examination ; to rob their Duties of their allotted Hours, or to borrow of their Duties their appointed Seasons, without

out ever making any Payment of them.

The learned and judicious Bp. Sanderſon, in a Sermon Preached to the People, gives them this wholeſome good Inſtruction, not to ingulf themſelves ſo wholly into the Buſineſſes of their particular Callings, as to abridge themſelves of convenient Opportunities for the Exerciſe of thoſe religious Duties, which they are bound to perform by virtue of their general Calling. This (ſays he) is a point of Duty; Men being commanded in their Callings to abide with God: A Point of Wiſdom alſo; it being a means to procure a Bleſſing upon their Labour, from his hands; who never fail-eth to ſerve them, that never fail to ſerve him. And a Point of Juſtice too, as due by way of Reſtitution: of which he gives this both ingenious and ſolid Proof; *We make bold with Gods Day,* (ſays he) *and diſpence with ſome of that Time which he hath ſanctified unto his Service, for our own Neceſſities.* It is equal, we ſhould allow him at leaſt as much of ours, as we borrow of his; though it be for our Neceſſities, or lawful Comforts. But if we rob him of ſome of his Time (as too often we do) employing it in our own Buſineſſes, without the Warrant of a juſt Neceſſity: we are to know it is Theft, yea Theft in the higheſt Decree, Sacrilege; and that therefore we are bound, at leaſt as far as petty Thieves were in the Law, to a four-fold Reſtitution. *Exod. 22. 1. 2. Sam, 12. 6.*

But how very many ſo overload and overburthen themſelves and their Families with ordinary worldly Buſineſſes, that either they quite neglect their Duties, or put God off with ſlight  
and

and *short* and *hasty* Duties; and neither afford *themselves* sufficient Time, nor allow their *Servants* convenient Opportunities of remembering their God, and minding their Souls Necessities.

These have *no leisure to consider*, that the Soul is of more worth than the Body, and Heaven more valuable than the Earth: and therefore that the Things that necessarily conduce to saving of the Soul, and securing of Heaven, must not wholly be neglected for any bodily Concernments, or worldly Interests whatsoever. We must *first seek the Kingdom of G. d.* and chiefly lay up a Treasure in Heaven: and therefore we must not suffer *worldly Cares* to take up an *undue Proportion* of our Time.

We must not engage in so *many* Businesses, nor so *eagerly pursue* and follow any, as that our *ordinary worldly Affairs* should hinder our selves or our Families from the Performance of *ordinary religious Exercises*. It is reported of the famous Mr. George Herbert, sometime Orator of the University of Cambridge, that when he came to have a *Family*, he was eminent and exemplary for his spiritual Love and Care of his *Servants*: by his *own practice* teaching *Mist-ers* this Duty, to allow their *Servants* dayly Time, wherein to *pray privately*, and to *enjoin* them to do it: holding this for true generally, That *publick Prayer done to such Persons, is no Prayer at all*. Our Love and Care even of our *Servants* spiritual Welfare, ought to be *greater* than our Love and Care of the Things of this World.

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As many so deeply plunge themselves into unnecessary Busineses, that they have no Leisure for religious Performances : So some so mainly mind earthly Things, that they make Religion subservient to their worldly Employment, take up a specious Profession of Religion, and fair Form of Godliness, chiefly to invite and draw Customers to their Shops ; and that they may deal falsely and unjustly, without Question or Suspicion ; and gain unreasonably and unconscionably, by a dissembled Sanctity and fictitious Piety.

*The last Sort of Persons reprov'd.*

And lastly ; Some Persons are to be reprov'd for mis-spending their Time in their Duties. You may think this strange, that Time should be thrown away in Duties. But I would have you to understand it may ; for you may lose your Time in Duties, these two waies ;

1. By performing them unseasonably.
2. By doing them formally.

1. You lose Time in Duty, if you perform it unseasonably. And that may be done these two Waies.

(1.) When one Duty thrusts and justles out another, and so the Duty is mis-timed : As if a Man do spend that Time in his Closet, and in religious Devotion, which God does require him to employ in his Shop, and in following his Vocation. So again ; if you read and pray  
privately

*privately* at home, when you should attend on the *publick* Ordinance : Or, *read* in your Bible, or Prayer Book, at Church, when you should *hearken* to the Sermon there : Or, if you do nothing but *read*, when you should *meditate* sometimes, and *confer* sometimes : Or, if you give way to such *good Thoughts*, as in Prayer, or hearing the Word at any Time, come into your Mind, but are *impertinent* and *irrelative* to the Matter in hand : Such Thoughts, tho' they be *materially* good, yet are *formally* evil ; tho' good in themselves, yet are *sinful to thee*, at such *unfit* and inconvenient Times ; and will at least taint and *fly-blow* thy necessary present Duty. To do any Duty wharever, when you should rather do *another*, is to *mis-spend Time* about such a Duty, which is to you *unseasonable*.

(2.) When Duty is perform'd at such a Time, when we are *most unfit for it*, then it is *unseasonable*, and Time is *lost* in it : As when we go to Prayer, when we are fitter to go to *sleep* ; and *kneel* upon the *Cushion*, when we are fitter to lay our *Head* upon the *Pillow* ; and *hold up* our *Hands* then, when we are scarce able to *hold open* our *Eyes* ; and *speak* to God then, when we hardly *bear* our *selves* *speak*.

When *Luther* during his retirement in the Castle at *Coburga*, for his Safety, enjoyed more leisure than ordinary ; one *Vitus Theodorus*, who then lived with him, informed *Melancthon* concerning him, that he spent in Prayer every Day *three Hours* at least, and those that were

were *fittest* and *properest* for his *Studies*.

And it is *commendable* in some *Masters* of *Families*, that as often as they can do it with any *convenience*, they perform *Evening-Prayer* in their *Families* before *Bed-Time*, yea before *Supper-Time*, when they are not *clogg'd* with *Meat*, nor *heavy* with *Sleep*; but are every way *freest* and *fittest* for *Duty*. Will you set your selves and your *Household* to do *Gods Work*, when you are wholly unfit to do your *own*? You lose *Time* in *Duty*, by performing it *unseasonably*. That's the first.

2. You lose *Time* in *Duty*, if you perform *Duty* no otherwise than *formally*, *customarily*, *slightly* and *superficially*. If you *handle* holy *Things* without any *Feeling*; If you do the *Duty*, for the *Matter* of it, but fail in the *Principle* and *Manner* of the *Duty*, and never look to the *End* of the *Duty*; have no real *Design*, and hearty *Intention* to *please* and *glorify* *God* thereby, and to gain and encrease in true *Holiness* of *Heart* and *Life*.

If you act, not out of a *Principle* of *Love*, and *inward Life* and *Liking*, but only out of some *external respect*; If you perform your *Services*, not out of a *filial* ingenuous *Disposition*, but merely out of a *slavish* *Fear* of being beaten, or of *losing* the *Wages* you expect for your *Work*: If you use only a *careless* and *supine* *Devotion*: If you matter not at all *how little* you do for *God*, or what is the *Frame* of your *Minds* and *Hearts* in what you do: If you give way to *vain Thoughts*  
in



in holy Duties : If you be not *intent* in your Religious Services, but instead of *using the World*, as if you used it not, you use good Duties as if you did not use them ; observe the Lords-Day, as if you observ'd it not ; confess and repent, as if you did no such thing ; hear, as if you heard not ; and pray, as if you prayed not : If you pray only out of *Custom*, and do not mind and well consider what you say, nor are affected with what you speak, nor desire what you ask : If you pray, and read, and hear, only because you are *brought up* so to do, and have *taken up* such a Practice, or because you would *satisfy natural Conscience*, and have the *good Opinion* and *Word* of all in your Families, and be *commended* by your Neighbours for *religious* Persons ; and do not pray to *this necessary End*, that so you may enjoy Communion with God, and get and obtain Pardon, and Grace, and Strength from God ; nor read the Scripture and good Books, and hear the Word preached, that so you may *know* your Duty in order to the *Practice* and Performance of it ; all the Time that is *thus spent* in Duty, is in a manner Time lost and *misspent* : In so doing you *lose* your Duties, and you *lose* your Time too.

But *especially*, if any shall *dare* to do nothing but whisper, and talk, and laugh ; to mock and jeer at the Word, and the Minister of it ; to be undecent, and rude, and profane in their Carriage and Behaviour, in a Christian Assembly, in the Time of Divine Worship, in the *Presence* of the great God, and in the

*Sight*

*Sight of the holy Angels ; 1 Cor. 11. 10. This is to lose the Time of publick Duty, if it be to be lost at all ; This is to lose the Time of Duty, with a Witness.*

And so I have done with the third Use, namely of *Reproof* and Rebuke to several sorts of Persons, who are guilty of the *Loss*, the lamentable *Loss* of their precious *Time*, and unvaluable *Opportunities*.

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## C H A P. VI.

*The fourth and last Use is of Exhortation, to Magistrates, Ministers, the People in general. Six quickening Motives to press the Duty of Redemption of Time. (1.) Consider how notably Jesus Christ redeem'd the Time, when he was here in the World. 1. He redeem'd the Time, to save us. 2. He redeem'd the Time, to be an Example to us. (2.) Consider further, that as Christ did once redeem the Time, to save us ; So the Devil does daily redeem the Time, to destroy us. (3.) Consider, how very notably many of the Saints and Servants of God have improved and redeemed their Time. (4.) Consider, that it is an act of Spiritual Wisdom to redeem the Time, and mere Madness and gross Folly not to redeem the Time. (5.) Consider, that if now thou losest and squanderest away thy Time, thou wilt at last be forced thy self to condemn thy foolish Negligence, and to justify the Care and Diligence of others,*

that were wiser for their own Souls than thy self. (6.) Consider, that do what we can to redeem our Time, we shall never repent at last of any Care we have had to redeem it, but shall certainly blame and find fault with our selves for being so careless of our Time, so negligent of good Opportunities as we have been. Serious considerative Christians do blame themselves for their Loss of Time, even in their Life-time : but they are especially sensible of it, and exceedingly ashamed of themselves for it, at their Death.

**T**HE fourth and last Use shall be of Exhortation, to put you upon the Duty of Redeeming Time.

Let *Magistrates* vigorously redeem the Time, in the faithful Execution, and impartial Administration of governing Justice ; and in being active and zealous, bold and courageous in the Cause of God and Goodness : in being a Terror to Evil, and not to good Works ; *Rom.* 13. 3, and in acting for the Punishment of Evil-doers, and for the Praise of them that do well : *1 Pet.* 2. 14. in repressing Vice, and checking Profaneness, and daily dashing Sin out of Countenance ; and in countenancing and encouraging, nourishing and cherishing Sobriety and Temperance, Vertue and Godliness, Holiness and Religion.

Let *Ministers* industriously redeem the Time, in not shunning to declare to the People all the Counsel of God ; *Acts* 20. 27. in urging Truths upon their own Hearts, and pressing and enforcing

forcing them upon others Souls; in labouring abundantly in the Lords Vineyard; in taking heed unto themselves, and to their Doctrine, and to all the Flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made them Over-seers; in feeding the Church of God with the wholsome Food of sound words; ver. 28. 1 Tim. 4. 16. in watching for Souls, as they that must give Account; Heb. 13. 17. in daily warning Sinners with Tears; Acts 20. 31. in perswading Men with Earnestness and Importunity, as those that well know the Terror of the Lord; 2 Cor. 5. 11. in endeavouring to save themselves and them that hear them, 1 Tim. 4. 16. to save some with Fear, pulling them out of the Fire; Jude 23. in taking all possible Care, lest they beat the Air, 1 Cor. 9. 26. and run in vain, and labour in vain; Phil. 2. 16. lest their Peoples Blood be required at their Hands, Ezek. 3. 18. and lest when they have preached to others, they themselves should become Cast-aways; 1 Cor. 9. 27. in discharging their Duty so painfully and faithfully, that though Israel be not gathered, though the straying and stragling Sheep be not reclaimed and brought home to God, yet they may be glorious in the Eyes of the Lord, and their God may be their Strength; Isa. 49. 5. That they may be pure from the Blood of all Men, Acts 20. 26. and may finish their Course with Joy; ver. 24. and be able to say, as the most laborious and indefatigable Apostle, St. Paul, expressed himself, with an Heart full of Comfort, when the Time of his Departure was at hand; 2 Tim. 4. 7, 8. I have fought a good Fight, as

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a faithful Souldier ; I have finish'd my Course, as a strenuous Runner ; I have kept the Faith, as a trusty Depository : Henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that Day.

Yea, let People in general give all serious constant Diligence to *redeem the Time*, and to *make their Calling and Election sure* : Believing, and considering, that we were not sent into this World to eat, and drink, and sleep, and sport, and play ; to take our Past-time and Recreation, and to enjoy a little short carnal Mirth, some sensual sinful Pleasure, or worldly Profit, or earthly Honour, *for a season* ; But to live in the constant Exercise of Reason, and Vertue, and true Goodness : To study the Nature and Attributes, the Mind and Will, the Word and Works, the Laws and Waies of God : To keep the Commandments of God, and the Faith of Jesus : Rev. 14. 12. To worship and serve our Creator, Redeemer, Sanctifier and Comforter : To prepare and provide for Eternity ; and to *do good to all, while we have Opportunity*.

And here, to proceed particularly, I shall

I. Propound some *Motives*, to quicken you ; And then,

II. I shall give you some *Directions*, to help you to gain the Time, and redeem the Opportunity.

To press you to the Duty, besides the several

veral Reasons of the Doctrine (which are also so many Motives to the Duty) I shall farther lay you down a six-fold Motive.

*The first Motive.*

First consider, how notably Christ redeem'd the Time, when he was here in the World. *It becometh us to fulfil all Righteousness.* sayes he, Mat. 3. 15. *Wist ye not that I must be about my Fathers Business?* Luke 2. 49. *I must work the Works of him that sent me, while it is Day: the Night cometh when no man can work* Job. 9. 4.

1. He redeemed the Time to save us.
2. To be an Example to us.

1. *He redeemed the Time, to save us.* His whole Life, to his very Death; yea, his Life and Death were nothing else but a continual Course of doing and suffering for our Salvation. Did Christ spend his Time, his Labour, his Blood, to save us? and shall we be backward to spend our Daies, our Pains, our Strength to serve him? Did Christ redeem the Time, to accomplish and work out our Redemption? and shall not we redeem the Time, to secure and work out our own Salvation?

2. *Christ redeem'd the Time, to be an Example to us.* Not an idle Word ever came out of his Mouth. He spake as never man spake; and did as never man did. He was serious and savory, holy and heavenly in his private Conferences, and took all Occasions to spiritualize

his Discourses. He redeemed Time for secret Prayer; He went about doing good: *Acts* 10. 38. He neglected his bodily Food, to gain an Occasion of spiritual Converse, and to feed a Soul: He professeth, it was his meat to do the will of him that sent him, and to finish his work; *John* 4. 34. his Delight to do the will of God. *Psal.* 40. 8. This he did, leaving us an Example, that we should follow his Steps; *1 Pet.* 2. 21. an eminent Example to be transcribed and copied out by us; that we likewise should redeem the Time, in Imitation of him, and Conformity to him.

Now where are the Men that seriously consider, Thus, thus Jesus Christ liv'd in the World? and are ready to say within themselves, I will do nothing but what I would do if Jesus Christ were by: I would act now, as if I followed Christ at the Heels. How very many have liv'd already the full Age of our blessed Saviour? Nay, how many have doubled our Saviour's Age? and yet how few have liv'd after the manner of the Life of Christ, one Day or Hour? or, in conformity to our Pattern and Exemplar, in any Measure done the Will, and wrought the Work of our heavenly Father? I may very fitly here take up the Words of a Religious Person, *Thou maiest well blush to behold the Life of Jesus Christ, because as yet thou hast studied no more to conform thy self to him, though thou hast been long in the Way of God.*

Let us henceforward daily eye the Life of Christ, as that which is an Example to us in all

all our Actions and Motions in the World ; in the midst of all the *Passions* to which we are subject, and *Temptations* to which we are exposed. Let's frequently reflect upon our selves, and seriously say, *Did Christ live thus ?* In all our Actings and Underrakings let's say continually, *Would Christ do thus ?* If not, how dare I, who profess my self a Christian, venture upon it ? If *Christ* were now upon the Earth, would he be wasteful and prodigal of his Hours ? would he be loose and wanton, vain and profane in his Life ? would Christ swear, and curse, or by any means be tempted to Perjury or false Testimony ? would he be drunk himself, and delight to make others drunk ? would Christ scoff and mock at Religion and Holiness, and jeer and deride the strictest Professors and Practisers of it ? would he that once *wept* over *Jerusalem*, be now jovial and merry, when publick Misery and common Calamity hangs over the Heads of a People laden with Iniquity ? could he find in his Heart to laugh and sport over a tottering, sinking, fainting, dying Nation ?

Take care to walk, even as *Christ* walked : 1 *John* 2. 6. Aim and endeavour to be in the World, as he was in the World. 1 *John* 4. 17. When you rise in the Morning, resolve thus with thy self ; I will *this Day* study to behave my self as *Christ* did : I will labour to exercise those Vertues, and to act those Graces, which *Jesus Christ*, when he was here on earth, was eminent in and exemplary for : I will this Day strive to be as meek and humble, as



free from pride and passion, malice and revenge ; as clear from covetousness and earthly-mindedness, discontent and impatience, as *Christ* himself was : To be as watchful against the World and the Devil, as resolv'd against Temptation, as sober and temperate, as just and righteous, as kind and merciful, as useful and beneficial to all about me, according to my measure and capacity, as *Christ* himself was : To do every Thing so, even as *Christ* himself, were he placed in such circumstances as I am, and stood in the same relations as I do, would do and act.

What *Christ* has done in *our* *Flesh* before us, is very possible to be done by us, in the strength of God and *Christ*. And it is a Thing not only possible, but very reasonable, that we the *Disciples* and Servants of *Christ* should improve *our* *Time* to the best advantage ; when he our great Lord and Master lost not an *Hour*, mispent not a *Minute* of all the *Time* of his whole *Life* lead here upon Earth.

It is true, we can never exactly answer our Copy, nor fully come up to our Example ; But let's endeavour to come as near as we can : for (as Mr. Herbert excellently) let this encourage you ;

*Who goeth in the Way which Christ hath gone,  
Is much more sure to meet with him, than one  
That travelleth by waies.  
Perhaps my God, though he be far before,  
My turn, and take me by the hand, and more  
My strengthen my decays.*

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The second Motive.

Consider in the second Place, That as Christ did redeem the Time, to save us; so the Devil does daily redeem the Time, to destroy us. As there is a good Spirit active in the World, inviting and alluring Men to Vertue and Goodness, and endeavouring to bring them to a participation of Holiness and Happiness with himself; So there is an evil, impure, unholied Spirit, perpetually soliciting and enticing Men to Sin and Wickedness, and labouring continually to hurry and precipitate them; or gradually and insensibly to draw them into the same condition of Perdition and Destruction, into which he himself is fallen and sunk, without hope of Remedy, or possibility of Recovery. The Devil was a murderer from the beginning. John 8. 44. He set upon Adam in Paradise, who was in his full strength: He provoked David to number the People: 1 Chron. 21. 1. Yea, he assailed Christ himself, Mat. 4. who was not only the Son of David, but the Son of God, and had nothing in him to give advantage to him. And when Satan left him, being overcome by him, he departed from him but for a season, Luke 4. 13: as if resolving to take a fit opportunity to return again to him, and have another bout with him. And he that takes heart to fight with the Head, will never spare the Members: He daily follows the Disciples of Christ, designing to draw them from God and their Duty: He

desir'd to have the *sifting* and shaking of *Peter*, liberty to do his worst to drive him from the Faith of Christ. *Luke* 22. 31. He studies to get advantage of us. *2 Cor.* 2. 11. The Head of this old malicious subtil *Serpent* is alwaies plotting and contriving our Sin and Misery, Fall and Ruin. We are not ignorant of his *Devices*, or sophistical Reasonings, *ver.* 11. He continually useth his *Methods*, or Wiles. *Eph.* 6. 11. The Tempter will tempt by some means or other; *1 Thess.* 3. 5. usually by suggestion, prompting and casting of evil Thoughts into our Minds: And often by *Perswasion*, or pressing the Suggestion, with such Reasons and Arguments as may move our Minds to approve, and incline our Wills to consent to some Evil as good. He labours to perswade us, either by *promising* some good, or *threatning* some evil to us. And sometimes he tempts us by *instigation* and *provocation*, or restless and importunate *urging* of the Suggestion, till, if it be possible, he has gain'd our Consent. He makes it his business to tempt us either *immediately*, or *mediate*ly, by his Agents and Instruments; making use of the choicest and most likely *Instruments* to work with us, and prevail upon us. He *suits* his Temptations to our *Temper*s, and observes and takes the most convenient Seasons of dealing successfully and effectually with us: He is still laying his Traps and Snares, to take us captive at his will. *2 Tim.* 2. 26. He is ready to assault us with his fiery Darts: *Eph.* 6. 16. to propose such sensual Baits, which, like poison'd Darts, inflaming,

flaming the parts, will wound us to Death, if the *consideration* of our Duty, the Promises and Terrors of Christ, received by our Faith, do not help to *quench* them.

The Devil loses no Moment of time, that may serve his Design, and further his Endeavour to undo us : He lets no Opportunity slip of doing us any Mischief. He is a nimble, stirring, *busy Being*. He goes to and fro in the Earth, and walks up and down in it. St. Peter tells us from his own experience, Luke 22. 31. and with some reference to Satans Confession and Acknowledgment, Job 1. 7. that our Adversary the Devil, as a roaring Lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour, 1 Pet. 5. 8. He's an Adversary in Law (as the Word here used imports) a cunning Plaintiff, whose work it is upon all occasions to indict and accuse us before God. He is also an Enemy in War : A subtil, and strong Enemy, like a Lion : A fierce and furious Enemy, like a Lion roaring through Anger, or impatient Hunger, to fright and amaze, and so catch his Prey : A venturous daring Enemy ; like a roaring Lion pinch'd with Hunger, ready to set upon any thing as his Prey : An indefatigably restless and industrious Enemy ; like a Lion walking up and down, as intent as may be to take and pursue every occasion and opportunity that offers and presents it self to him ; alwaies watching how to get us into his power and reach : And lastly, as mischievous and pernicious, as mortal and deadly an Enemy as can be ; earnestly seeking, not whom he may bite, or lightly hurt.

hurt and wound, but whom he may devour, undo and destroy, Soul and Body ; *swallow down at one draught*, as the word καταπίνει signifies ; and by swallowing him down, as it were *turn him into his own Nature*, make him *Partaker* of a diabolical Temper.

As God is φιλόστοργος, a Lover of all Men ; so the Devil is μισόστοργος, an Hater of all Men : And as God loves the Faithful peculiarly, so the Devil is an Enemy to them especially : [ *your* ] Adversary, saies St. Peter *here emphatically* : Above all, he desires [ *your* ] Destruction, with an *insatiable Appetite*.

Now what's the Apostles *Inference* from all this ? Why since the Devil is sedulous and watchful, do not you become sluggish and secure, but *be sober and vigilant* : Be *sober*, that you may be *vigilant* : Be *vigilant* ; γρηγορήσατε ; Let every Christian be a Gregory, a *Vigilantius*, not only *awake*, but *watchful* ; considerative, and active ; recollect and attend to Principles of Action, and reduce and improve good Principles to seasonable Christian Practice : be habitually careful and diligent, and very industriously use and exercise all appointed approved means, whereby he may be suitably provided and prepared, and may not be unhappily surpriz'd and foiled by any suddain Assault of his Spiritual Enemy. Because the Devil is so vigilant to *work out your Damnation*, be you therefore vigilant to *work out your Salvation*.

The Devil is said to have great wrath, because he knoweth he hath but a short Time : Rev.

12. 12. He is so much the hotter and more eager, because his Time is contracted, and draws to an end. He redeems Time *most at last*; and yet he was *always* busy enough, *ever ever busy*; He never lost any of his Time. in the way of *Temptation*: He never neglected any Occasion of gaining Experience, and perfecting himself in his Arts and Stratagems of soliciting and seducing unwary and inconsiderate Sinners. Let us *learn* here of the very Devil himself: Let us, who have lost much of our Time, be as laborious to redeem it to our benefit and advantage; as the Devil himself, who never omitted any Opportunity, *consider'd as a Tempter*, is industrious to improve it to our greatest damage and disadvantage;

*The third Motive.*

Consider thirdly, *how very notably many of the Saints and Servants of God have improved and redeemed their Time*, Enoch walked with God, and persevered in the Ways of God: Gen. 5. 24. Before his Translation he had this Testimony, that he pleased God. Hebrews 11. 5.

Noah was a just Man, and perfect in his Generations, and walked with God, in a very vicious and corrupt Age: Gen. 6. 9, 11, 12. was a pattern of Piety and Probity, and a Preacher of Righteousness to a World of Sinners, 2. Pet. 2. 5. warning them to amend their abominable Lives, or else that Vengeance would befall them: And he prepared an Ark, and by his Obedience out of a Principle of Faith and  
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pious Fear, condemn'd the *World* of the Ungodly. *Heb.* 11. 7. *Abraham* was the Father of all the Faithful, the great Example of Faith, He believed in Hope against Hope. *Rom.* 4. 16. having no natural grounds of Hope: And not only believed God's Promises, but perform'd very high acts of Obedience to God: When God called him to his Foot, *Isa.* 41. 2. to go to and fro at his command, and as he should appoint him; he obeyed, and went out of his Country, not knowing whither he went: *Heb.* 11. 8. And when he was tried, was ready to offer up his only Son, in whom the Promises were made to him; accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the Dead. *v.* 17. 19. I know *Abraham* says God, that he will command his Children and his household after him, and they shall keep the Way of the Lord. *Gen.* 18. 19. *Lot* was a just and righteous Man amongst a People monstrously wicked, and laid to heart the provoking Sins of the Time and place in which he lived; *2 Pet.* 2. 7, 8. and beleived that Judgment lingered not, but that the Judge stood before the door; and he took the Opportunity to warn his Sons-in-law presently to flee from the Wrath approaching, though he seemed to them as one that mocked. *Gen.* 19. 14. *Job* was perfect and upright, and one that feared God and eschewed Evil. He was not carried away with the Idolatry and unjust dealings of the Edomites, amongst whom he lived. As occasion required, he continually offered Sacrifices to God for his Children, out of Fatherly Care of their spiritual Good, and as a means to keep them in the Favour of God:

God : being jealous over them with a Godly Jealousie, lest at any time when they had feasted together, they should have forgotten themselves, and offended God, in their feasting and mirth. *Job. 1. 1, 5.* And he improved his afflictions as an opportunity of exercising an exemplary Patience. *v. 22. James 5. 11.* David was a Man after God's own heart, and in ruling the People he did fulfil all God's Will : *Acts. 13. 22.* He served his own Generation by the Will of God, or, the Will of God in his own Generation. *v. 36.* Holy Daniel was a Person devoted to God's true Worship and fear, given to Prayer. He could not content himself with a mental Devotion for a Month together, but when he knew the Writing was signed, instead of restraining vocal Prayer for thirty Days, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day ; and his Windows being open in his Chamber toward Jerusalem, he glorified God with his Tongue, he prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime : *Dan. 6. 10.* This righteous Man was bolder than any Lion in the Den, *Prov. 28. 1.* which he was by his Enemies Envy and Malice, and the Kings established Decree, in apparent Danger to be speedily cast into, for his Constancy in his Religion, and the Integrity of his Devotion, Zachary and Elizabeth were both sincerely righteous before God, walking in all the Commandements and Ordinances of the Lord blameless ; *Luke 1. 6.* So, as their Obedience to God's Will, with God's merciful Allowance to human frailties, was sure to be acceptable in God's sight. The  
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devout Cornelius feared God with all his House, and took every Occasion and good Opportunity of making Prayer, and giving Alms. (*Acts* 10. 2. ) The twelve Tribes are said to have served God instantly day and night ; to have spent their Time in Piety and Obedience to God. ( *Acts* 26. 7. ) And herein did St. Paul exercise himself, to have alwaies a Conscience void of offence towards God, and towards Men. *Acts* 24. 16. He who before was a Blasphemer, a Persecuter, and injurious, yet when the Grace of God was bestowed upon him, laboured more abundantly than all the Apostles. *1 Cor.* 15. 10. St. Austin made much of his precious Time after his Conversion: he spent it ever after in reading, meditating, disputing, writing, watching, fasting, prayer, and diligent preaching, in which he was more instant and fervent after he had taken the Office of a Bishop than ever he was before. 'Twas his usual wish, that Christ, when he came, might find him *aut precantem, aut predicantem*, either praying, or preaching, The laborious Calvin did husband his time, and improve his hours to admiration. The learned Whitaker gives this testimony of him ; How much he wrote is known to all, says he ; But every Year he preached 286 Sermons, and read 186 Lectures, besides innumerable other Businesses and Employments. Even in the time of his Illness, no Saying was oftener in his Mouth than this, That an idle life was very grievous to him ; when (as Melchior Adam speaks) his Brethren in the Ministry, even in their Health and Strength, might seem to be idle compar'd with Calvin

*in his Sickneſſ and Weakneſſ.* And when his Friends intreated him to abſtain from dictating, eſpecially from writing himſelf in his Sickneſſ; he return'd them this Answer, *What, would you have the Lord to find me idle at his Coming?* Yea, ſo ſaving was he of that time which might be laid out for the good of the Church, that though the very ſight of *Beza* was always pleaſing and reſreſhing to him, yet when he came to viſit him in his laſt Sickneſſ, he would often ſignifie to him, *that he could not in Conſcience detain and hinder him from his more weighty Buſineſſes and uſeful Employments.* It is ſaid of *Beza* the *Phanix* of his Age, that *he wrote Things worthy to be read, and did Things worthy to be written.* Mr. Fox gives this notable Character of Mr. *John Hooper* the Martyr, that *he was ſpare of Diet, ſparer of Words, and ſpareſt of Time.* Holy Mr. *John Bradford* ſlept not commonly above *four hours* in the Night: and in his bed, till ſleep came, his Book went not out of his Hand. His cheif Recreation was in no gaming or other paſtime, but only in honeſt Company, and comely talk, wherein he would ſpend a little time after Dinner at the Board, and ſo to Prayer and his Book again. He counted that Hour not well ſpent, wherein he did not ſome good, either with his Pen, Study, or in exhorting of others. Preaching, reading and praying was all his whole life. Many profited in Piety by his Society. Bp. *Ridly*, when a Priſoner in *Oxford*, in a Letter to *Bradford* breaks out into theſe pathetical Exprefions; O Good Brother, bleſſed be God in thee, and  
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blessed be the time that ever I knew thee! Mr. *Hugh Latimer* was so far from idling and loitering, that all King *Edward's* Days he preached for the most part every Sunday twice. And this was so much the more remarkable in him (as Mr *Fox* observes) *that* he being a *fore bruised Man* by the fall of a Tree, and above 67 Years of Age, took so little ease, and care of sparing himself, to do the People good: He used indefatigable Travel and Diligence in in his own private Studies, who notwithstanding both his Years and other pains in Preaching, every Morning ordinarily, *Winter and Summer*, about two of the Clock in the Morning, was at his Book most diligently. The learned Bp *Ridly* usually every Holy Day and Sunday preached in some one Place or other, except he were otherwise hindered by weighty Affairs and Business. He used all kinds of ways to mortify himself, and was given to much Prayer and Contemplation: Duely every Morning, as soon as he had put on his Apparrel, he prayed upon his Knees in his Bed-chamber the space of half an Hour: from which, if Business did not interrupt him, he immediately went to his Study, where he continued till ten of the clock, the Hour of Common Prayer with his House-hold. An Hour after Dinner he returned to his Study, and there continued, except Suiters or Business abroad were occasion of the contrary, until five of the clock at night, the time of Evening Prayer with his Family, An hour after Supper he returned again to his Study, continuing there till eleven of the clock at night: and then closed

closed the Day with Prayer upon his Knees, before he lay down to take his rest. Being at his Manner of *Fulham* as divers Times he used to be, he read dayly a *Lecture* to his Family at the Common Prayer, beginning at the Acts of the Apostles, and so going throughout all the Epistles of St. Paul, giving to every Man that could read a New Testament, hiring them besides with Money to learn certain principal Chapters by heart : reading also to his House-hold oftentimes the 101 Psalm; being marvelous careful over his Family, that they might be a Spectacle of all Vertue and Honesty to others, As he was Godly and vertuous himself, so nothing but Vertue and Godliness reigned in his House. He gave this as a general Rule to his Kinsfolk, yea, to his own Brother and Sister, that they doing evil, should seek or look for nothing at his hand, but should be as Strangers and Aliens unto him : and that they should be his Brother or Sister, which used Honesty, and a good trade of Life. When Dr. *Cranmer* was made Arch-Bishop of *Canterbury*, he evermore gave himself to continual Study, not breaking the order that in the University he commonly used: that is, by five of the clock in the Morning he was at his Book, and spent his time in Study and Prayer till nine of the clock : by reason of other private Studies, and by means of useful proper Employments he was never idle, no Hour of the Day was spent in vain by him, but was so bestowed as tended to the Glory of God, the Service of his Prince, or the Commodity of the Church. The excellent

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Bp. *Juel* read much, and wrote much, besides his publick Employment: Scarce any Year in all the Time of his *Bishoprick* passed, wherein he published not some *famous Work* or other. At nine a clock at Night, he used to call all his *Servants* to an *Account* how they had spent that Day, and after Prayer to admonish them accordingly: Then he returned to his Study, where often he sate till after *Midnight*. When he was very *weak*, a Gentleman meeting him as he was riding to preach at *Lacock* in *Wiltshire*, earnestly desired him to return home for his health's sake, telling him that it was better that the People should want one Sermon, than be altogether deprived of such a Preacher: To whom he replied, That it best became a Bishop to dy Preaching: alluding to that of *Vespasian*, It becomes a Emperour to dy standing: and thinking upon his Master's Saying, Blessed is that Servant, whom the Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing, *Mat. 24. 46*, And presently after that very Sermon, on *Gal. 5. 16. walk in the Spirit*; by reason of his Sickness encreasing upon him, he was forced to take his bed, from which he never came off till his Soul quitted his frail Body, and was translated to everlasting Glory. He said in his last Sickness, That seeing God had not granted his Desire to glorify him by sacrificing his Life for the Defence of his Truth, yet he rejoiced that his Body was exhausted and worn away in the Labours of his holy Calling. It was the Motto of the pious and painful Mr. *Perkins*, that which he used to write in the Frontispiece of all his Books, *Minister ver-*

*bi-er, hoc age* : Thou art a Minister of God's Word, mind thy Work, and attend thy Business. It was also the Motto of Mr. Samuel Crook, *Impendam & expendar* : I will spend and be spent. It was moreover the Motto of Bp. Usher's Episcopal Seal, when he was Bishop of Meath, which he continued in the Seal of his Primacy also, *Vae mihi si non euangelizauero*, Woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel : All which they severally answer'd and made good in an eminent and very exemplary Manner. The learned and religious Dr John Reynolds was so very careful to *redeem the Time*, that when the Heads of the Houses in Oxford came to visit him in his last Sickness, which he contracted meerly by excessive Pains in his Study (whereby he brought his body to a very Sceleten) and earnestly perswaded him that he would not lose the Substance for the Accidents, not lose his life for Learning: He smiling answered with those excellent Words of the Prince of Satyrists, That to save his life, he would not lose the Ends of living. I may well apply to these Worthies those of A Kempis. These are given for an Example to all pious Persons, and should be more powerful to provoke us to profit well, than a number of lazy lukewarm Persons to draw us to slackness and Remisness. Let us follow these fair and bright Exemplars, in the main of their tendency to teach us to live serviceably to God, usefully and profitably to our selves and others.

We have hitherto been *ingentium Exemplorum parvi Imitatores*, (to use Salvian's Expression) small Imitators of great Examples. Q  
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how *short* do we come of many of the eminent Saints and Servants of God, who redeemed their Time, and served their Generations by the Will of God in *former Ages* ! Yea, may not our own *personal Knowledge*, and particular Observation of the Labour and Diligence, *Improvement* and Growth of other Christians, put *our selves to the blush* ? Many that have liv'd in the *same* Times and Places, in the *same* Parishes and Families with our selves ; Many that have sat under the *same* Ordinances, enjoyed no better Means, received no greater Helps than our selves, have yet surpassed and *excelled us* in the gracious Frame of their Hearts, out-strip'd and out-shined us in the Holiness and Exemplariness of their Lives. To what a *pitch* are others gotten ? to what a *height* have they arriv'd and attain'd ? What *right apprehensions* have they gotten of the Nature of God, and Undertaking of Christ, for the *promoting* of Holiness ? What a good Understanding of the Word of God ? What Insight into the various Providences of God ? What warm and good *Affections*, suited to *true Notions* of Things ? How have they proceeded in Knowledge, grown in Grace, profited in Experience, increased in Strength, abounded in Comfort ? What Power have they gotten over their Corruptions, what Strength against Temptations ? What Government of their Senses ? What Command of their Passions ? What Freedom and Enlargement, and *Delight* in Duties ? How useful are they in their Places ? How serviceable to God and their Generations ?

What

What Evidence have they gotten of the Goodness of their State, of the Truth and Sincerity of their Love to God, and of the special Love and Favour of God to them? What good grounds for their Hopes of Heaven and Happiness? How fit are they to live? How ready and prepared to die? How meet to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light? Alas! how far do *we fall short of them*, and come behind them? What *Fools* have we been, when others have been *wise* for their own Souls? When others *shine as Lights*, and as bright *Stars* in the World; are not we as *dark as a Coal*, or as *dim as a Glow-worm*? Are not we, who are planted in the same Soil, dressed and cultivated with the same Hand, watered with the same River of God, wetted with the same Heavenly Dew, and refreshed with the same Droppings of the Sanctuary; yet notwithstanding as barren and unfruitful as may be? when others of our Neighbours and Fellow-Christians do bear not only *Leaves*, but *Fruit*; bring forth *Fruit in due Season*, *Fruit meet for the Dresser*, much *Fruit*, which will *abound to their own account*. We have been brought up in the same House, we have suckled at the same Breasts, and sate at the same Table; We have eaten the same Milk, the same Meat; But we have not grown *by the sincere Milk of the Word*, we have not relished and concocted the spiritual Food of our Souls as others have done: The Word of Gods Grace has not been sweet unto our Taste, as it has been unto others; We have not desired  
it,



it, delighted in it, and received it in the *Love* of it, as others have done ? and therefore we have not profited by the Word, we have not been nourished and strengthened by it, as others have been. Oh how much *Leanness* may be found in our Souls, when others are *thriving* and *well-liking* in the Eye of God and good Men ? Others have excell'd and exceeded us: Our Fellow-Christians have out-shot us, out-grown us, out-run us, out-done us.

*Themistocles* professed he could not sleep for thinking of the Trophies of *Miltiades* : And when *Julius Caesar* was employed in *Spain* in the Office of a *Questor*, or Judge in matters of Law, and coming to *Cales* beheld there the Image or Portraiture of *Alexander the Great* in the Temple of *Hercules*, he was *ashamed* to think of his own *Sloth*, and *sighed* to consider, that as yet he had perform'd *no memorable Act* at those *Years* wherein *Alexander* had conquered the whole *World* : and presently craved leave to depart, that so he might take the first Occasions of greater Actions in the City. So when we see and consider what *others have acted at our Years*, how others have done more good to their own Souls, more good to the Souls of their Relations, more spiritual good in their Families and Places of abode ; have conquer'd their own Passions, subdued Temptations and Lusts, and been the means of bringing others into Subjection and Obedience to the Lord Christ ; it may cause a more than ordinary *Blush* to arise in our *Faces*, if there be any *Christian Blood* in them.

O let others considerable Improvements and Proficiency quite *shame us* out of our Idleness, Negligence and Indiligence; and quicken and *provoke us* to Activity and Industry, in working the Work of God, and working out our Salvation with Fear and Trembling.

*The fourth Motive.*

Consider farther, That it is an *Act of spiritual Wisdom to redeem the Time*. Redeeming the Time is called a *walking in Wisdom*; Col. 4. 5, a *walking not as Fools, but as Wise*, in the Verse before my Text, they are commended for *wise Virgins*, who took Oil in their Vessels with their Lamps. Mat. 25. 4.

And on the *contrary*, it is *meer Madnes, and gross Folly, not to redeem the Time*. They are noted for *foolish Virgins*, who took their Lamps, & took no Oil with them, v. 3. 'Tis *Folly for a Merchant to trifle away the Time of his Trade*. Solomon marks him for a *Fool*, who has a *Price in his Hand to get Wisdom, and has no heart to use it*, Prov. 17. 16.

What an *odd and foolish Humour*, what a weak and childish Carriage and Behaviour, what a vain and fruitless Practice and Employment was that of the Emperour *Domitian*, to spend so many Hours in catching and killing *Flies*, when he should have been in the *Senate-House*, consulting for the good of the *Commonwealth*? Which occasioned *Vibius Crispus*, when a certain Person asked whether any one were *within with Caesar*? to return this smart Answer, *There is not so much as a Fly with him*.

And how has the World *scorn'd and laughed at Caligula*? who when he drew out his *Army* on the *Sea-shore*, and made a *Shew of War*, on a suddain he only commanded his Souldi-

ers to gather a company of *Cockle-Shells*, and to fill their Shields and Bosoms with them ; affirming that they were the *Spoils* of the *Sea*, and were due to the *Capitol* and *Palace*. So how contemptible in the Eyes of God and good Men do many Christians render themselves, by their *toyish* trifling Actions, and *petty* inconsiderable Employments, who were sent into the World about matters and *Businesses* of the greatest weight and moment ?

When a certain *Epicure* made his Will, he bequeathed to his *Player*, to his *Cook*, and to his *Jester*, *Talents* and *Pounds*, but *Philosopho obolum*, an *Half-penny* only to him that would have taught him *Wisdom*. And is not the Distribution of most Mens Time much after the same absurd Measure, and foolish proportion ? What vast Portions of the rich Treasure of Time do they give and allow to sensual Pleasures and carnal Delights, and freely bestow and lavish out upon secular Affairs and worldly Employments ? But if they part with any at all, alas how few Minutes, how very frail and poor a pittance of Time is it, that they find in their Hearts to spare in a Day, a Week, a Month, a Year, yea, in a whole Life-time, to God and Religion, and the Needs and Concerns of their own Souls ?

The Reverend Bp. *Joseph Hall* relates a very remarkable Story out of *Bromiard*, of a certain Lord in his Time that had a Fool in his House, to whom the Lord gave a Staff, and charg'd him to keep it till he should meet with one that was more Fool than himself ; and if he met with such

such an one, to deliver it over to him. Not many years after this *Lord* falling sick even unto Death, his *Fool* came to see him, and was told by his sick *Lord* that he must shortly leave him: And whither wilt thou go said the *Fool*? Into another World, said his *Lord*: And when wilt thou come again? within a Month? No: Within a Year? No: When then? Never: Never? And what Provision hast thou made for thy Entertainment there whither thou goest? None at all: No, said the *Fool*, none at all? *Here, take my Staff*: Art thou going away for ever, and hast taken no order or care how thou shalt speed in that other World whence thou shalt never return? *Take my Staff, for I am not guilty of any such Folly as this.*

And truly they that *here* neglect to provide for *hereafter*, to lay up a durable Treasure in Heaven, to make sure of a Building of God, an House not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens; of an Inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in the Heavens; shall certainly be *branded* and upbraided for their *Folly* to all *Eternity*.

What *Folly* it is to count the *one thing needfull* the only *needless thing*? What *Folly* and *Madness* to part with Heaven for uncertain Riches, and corruptible Wealth, or a few merry hours here on Earth?

What a *shameful Folly* it is, when the *Stork* in the Heaven knoweth her appointed Times, and the *Turtle*, and the *Crane*, and the *Swallow* observe the Time of their coming; *Jer. 8, 7.* for Men and Christians not to discern and under-

stand the gracious Seasons and special Opportunities of their particular Duties ?

What grand and gross Folly is it, for Men to have but *one Life's Time* of necessary Preparation for eternal Life, and to live and dy in a total, wilful, desparate Neglect of it ?

Yea, to have but *one small part of Time* to do all that ever they can do for their own and others eternal Weal, and to spend this *little Portion* of Time, in *encreasing* their own and others *Sins*, and in *destroying* their own and others *Souls* ? What prodigious, stupendious Folly is it, to be *weary* of that which *flies* away too *fast*, and cannot be recall'd ; and to use *Arts* and *Devices* to pass that Time away in *Vanity*, which can only be spent profitably and comfortably in a daily diligent Provision for *Eternity* ? What absurd and ridiculous Folly is it (a very heathen Philosopher being Judge in the Case) for Men to be so far from *suffering others to possess themselves of their Mannours or Farms*, or in the least to *encroach and gain upon their Bounds* ; and yet to permit them to enter upon their Time, nay themselves to induct them into the Possession of it ? For those that are so wary, as never to divide their Money among any, yet to be so ready to distribute their Time to so very many ? For those that are very strait and hard in keeping their Patrimony, when once it comes to the spending of their Time to be extreamly lavish and wasteful of that, of which only we can be honestly covetous ?

Once more, What miserable unhappy Folly is it in the most of Men, to throw away their Time

Time slightly and carelessly, profusely and prodigally, and yet to be *impatiently troubled*, and even distracted and tormented when *all is gone*? Which aptly leads me to the fifth Motive.

*The fifth Motive.*

Consider moreover, that *if now thou lovest and squanderest away thy Time, thou wilt at last be forced thy self to condemn thy foolish Negligence, and to justify the Care and Diligence of others, that were wiser for their own Souls than thy self; though here thou didst nothing but jeer and deride them, scorn and scoff at them.*

As *Dionysius* on his *Death-bed*, when he heard *Thales* discoursing notably about the Nature and Excellency of Moral Philosophy, *curst* his Pastimes, Sports and Pleasures that had taken him off, and diverted him from the Study of so *worthy* a Subject: So will careless Sinners and loose Livers, when *Death approaches*, and Conscience accuses, *loudly exclaim* against all their foolish sensual Delights, which turn'd off their Minds from weightier Matters, and hindred their Acquaintance with *better Things*, and their living to higher and nobler Purposes in the World.

The Heathen *Moralist* could observe thus much, That Persons prodigal of their Time at present, *at last* cry out upon themselves for *Fools*, that they have not liv'd any part of the Time they have been in the World.

And it is a notable Place, and remarkable Passage to this purpose, which we find in the fifth Chapter of the Book of *Wisdom*, the third and fourth Verses; *They repenting and*

groaning for anguish of Spirit, shall say withi<sup>n</sup> themselves, *This was he whom we had sometimes in derision, and a Proverb of reproach. We Fools accounted his Life madness, and his end to be without honour. How is he numbred among the Children of God, and his lot is among the Saints ? And in the seventh and eighth Verses ; We wearied our selves in the way of Wickedness, and Destruction : ——— But as for the way of the Lord, we have not known it. What hath Pride profited us ? or what good hath Riches with our vaunting brought us ?*

*'Tis therefore a seasonable good Premonition Hour shall draw near, thou wilt then begin to have quite other sentiments, and vastly different Apprehensions of thy whole Life past ; and wilt grieve and mourn exceedingly that thou hast continually been so remiss and negligent.*

When you come to die, you will be ready that is given by a pious Person, *When thy last to cry out with Cræsus, Solen, Solon, who had before time taught him of Blessedness without regard : You will then be apt in like manner to say, Such and such a Minister did frequently and faithfully tell me my Duty, and my Danger ; Such and such a Friend dealt plainly with me, and well advis'd and counsel'd me ; but, Fool that I was, I would hear no Instruction, I would receive no Admonition, I would bear no Reproof, I would take no warning.*

*How strangely will you shortly be astonish'd at the impartial Review of your unexcusable Ill-husbandry of all the Time in this World allotted*

allotted you ? What wounding, heart-renting *revengeful Self-reflections* will you suffer ? What passionate violent *Rage* against your selves will you be forced to feel within your selves ? What bitter Anguish, and *desperate Horror* will you unavoidably and irresistibly fall under, when you sadly recount, and *too late remember*, how inconsiderately and unwarily, loosely and vainly you have passed your Time, and spent your Years here on Earth ; what golden Seasons of Grace you have lost ; and scorn'd, and dishonour'd, and abused all that would not act the Parts of *Fools* and *Mad-men*, like your selves ? When you have utterly lost, and fully, and *finally undone* your selves, with what *Gripes* and *Groans* will you then *look back* upon all the Means and Mercies, Helps and Assistances, Opportunities and Advantages which here you enjoyed, but *slighted* and *undervalued*, dream'd, and fool'd, played, and sinned away ; being only concern'd for things of *nought*, and busy in doing *worse than nothing* ? What a pain and torture will it be to consider, that when you know you have had sufficient Discretion and exceeding Care, Prudence and Providence enough, and more than enough, in *other Matters*, you should be dull and little's, sluggish and sottish, wanting and defective in the *only commendable necessary* point of Wisdom ? A Man's falling out with himself for ever, the sharp Rebukes and cutting Upbraidings of a Man's own Conscience, and Self-condemnation for former Folly and Madness, will certainly be *no small part* of the dreadful intolerable Torments of Hell.



## The sixth Motive.

Sixthly and lastly ; Consider once more ; That do what we can to redeem our Time, we shall never repent at last of any Care we have had to redeem it ; but shall certainly blame and find fault with our selves for being so careless of our Time, so negligent of good Opportunities as we have been.

1. Good Men do often in their Life-time confess and condemn their Loss and Neglect of their precious Time.

That it was so long before they began to redeem it. St. Austin very much laments his coming in to Christ no sooner. *'Twas late, Lord, before I knew thee, the true Light,* ( says he ) *alas! I knew thee but late.*

And that they have redeem'd it no better, since first they went about it. The devout St. Bernard, who was so rarely pious a Person, and so continually given to divine Meditation, yet bewails most passionately of his spiritual Backwardness and Unproficiency : *O my God, my whole Life makes me afraid,* says he, *for if I diligently examine it, that which appears to me in it is either Sin or Barrenness.* And again ; *I cumber the Ground as a barren Tree,* says he, *and as a base Beast I waste and consume more than I profit.* I am ashamed to live, because I profit so little ; and I'm afraid to dy, because I am unprovided. Erasmus professed concerning himself, *They accuse me for doing too much, but my own Conscience accuses me for doing too little, and being too slow.* It is reported of Mr. Samuel Crook,

Crook. that whensoever his Preaching-day happen'd upon *Januar. 17.* ( which was his Birthday ) he still noted his Years compleat, with this Penitential Epiphonema, ὁ Θεὸς ἰλάσθητί μοι τὰ ἁμαρτωλά. God be merciful to me a Sinner.

An Eminent Divine, yet living, who has laboured more abundantly than the most of his Brethren in the Ministry, yet expresses himself in such humble Self-reflections as these ; For my own part, says he, though I have long liv'd in a sense of the Preciousness of Time, and have not been wholly idle in the World ; yet when I have the deepest Thoughts of the great everlasting Consequents of my Work, and of the Uncertainty and Shortness of my Time, I am even amazed to think that my Heart can be so slow and senseless, as to do no more in such a case. The Lord knows, and my accusing wounded Conscience knows, that my Slothfulness is so much my shame and admiration, that I am astonished to think that my Resolutions are no stronger, my Affections no livelier, and my Labour and Diligence no greater, when God is the Commander, and his Love the Encourager, and his Wrath the Spur, and Heaven or Hell must be the Issue. — Let who will speak against such a Life, it shall be my daily grief and moan, that I am so dull, and do so little. And in another Discourse he makes this free and open acknowledgment ; For my self, says he, as I am ashamed of my dull and careless Heart, and slow and unprofitable course of Life ; so the Lord knows, I am ashamed of every Sermon that I preach : When I think what I have been speaking of, and who sent me, and that

Mens Salvation or Damnation is so much concerned in it; I am ready to tremble, lest God should judg me as a Slighter of his Truth, and the Souls of Men, and lest in the best Sermon I should be guilty of their Blood.

The Trees of Righteousness are apprehensive of their own Unfruitfulness, troubled at it, mourn under it, and use themselves to such holy Breathings as that of Mr. Herbert,

O that I were an Orange-Tree,  
That busy Plant!  
Then should I ever laden be,  
And never want  
Some Fruit for him that dressed me.

Serious, considerative Christians do blame themselves for their Loss of Time even in their Life-time But,

2. They are especially sensible of it, and exceedingly ashamed of themselves for it at their Death.

They that have been the most busy stirring Christians all their Life-time, when they come to die do repent of their Laziness, blush to think of their spiritual Slothfulness, bewail and lament their Carelessness and Negligence. They that have been the Wonders of the World for Strictness and Preciseness, Singularity and Severity of holy Living; that have been admired for their Usefulness, Industry, Diligence and Activity, yet when they lay a dying, have condemned themselves, censured their past Lives, and earnestly wished, O! that they had been a  
thou-

*thousands times more holy and religious, more painful and labourious for God, and their own and others Souls. Melchior Adam relates in the Life of the Learned and holy Theodore Beza, that when he was very aged, and plainly perceived his approaching End, he often used that Saying of St. Austin, Diu vixi, diu peccavi : I have lived long, I have sinned long. The excellent and useful Philip de Mornay, in his last Sickness said to the Minister that assisted him, I have a great Account to make, having received much, and profited little. So the painful and pious Dr. Robert Harris, when a Friend told him in his Sickness, Sir, you may take much comfort in your Labours, you have done much good : His Answer was ; Ob ! I am an unprofitable Servant, I have not done any thing for God as I ought : Loss of Time sits heavy upon my Spirit : Work, work apace ; Assure your selves nothing will more trouble you when you come to dy than that you have done no more for God, who has done so much for you. Yea, the Reverend and holy Bp. Usher, a most laborious and sedulous Servant of God, a Prodigy of Industry, a Person that never was known to lose an Hour, but was ever employed in his Master's Business, either praying, preaching, studying, writing, reading, or hearing others read to him ; either resolving of Doubts, or exhorting, instructing, giving good, wholesome and holy Counsel to such as came to visit him : yet ( as Dr. Bernard relates in his Life ) the very last Words that ever he was heard to utter in praying for Forgiveness of Sins, were these ; But Lord, in special forgive my Sins of Omission,*

*If*

If the *choicest Saints* on Earth, the faithfullest Servants of God in the World, who have surpassed and transcended us by many Degrees, do close and end their Lives with an humble Confession, and earnest Petition for Forgiveness and Pardon of their *Sins of Omission*; surely then we have reason to conclude, that *we our selves*, do what we can, shall repent at last of doing *too little*, and not repent and complain of having done *too much*.

And if those that have well redeem'd their Time complain, especially at the Hour of Death, that they have *lost too much* of it; *What a case then* will the careless negligent World be in, when their sleepy consciences shall be roused and awakened, and they be hastened and hurried out of this World, and their Souls and Bodies shall be just a parting, and they shall look *behind them* upon an idle, loose and lazy Life, and look *before them* upon a dreadful, horrible, terrible Judgment?

I have done with the *Motives* to press you to the *Duty*: In the next place I shall give you some *Directions*, which may be so many *Means* to help you to regain the Time, and redeem the Opportunity. Take these *twelve* following.

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## CH A P. VII.

**Direction (1.)** If ever we would redeem the Time we must endeavour to be thoroughly convinc'd of the great value and real worth of Time; In respect

spect of the Price paid for it : In regard of the use and end to which it serves : Considering what precious Thoughts the more improved Heathens had of Time : And what damned Spirits, and dying Persons who have not made their Peace with God, think of Time. Direct. ( 2. ) If we would well redeem the Time, we must often examine our selves, and call our selves to a serious strict Account for the spending of our Time. This was the Precept of Pythagoras, and the Practice of Sextius, Seneca, and Titus Vespasian. Direct. ( 3. ) That we may rightly redeem our Time, let Conscience have some Authority with us, and procure some reverence from us. Stand much in awe of thy own Conscience, which will either acquit and absolve thee, or surely judg and condemn thee. Direct. ( 4. ) If ever we would redeem the Time, we must live and act, and do every thing as in the sight and presence, and under the eye and inspection of God. The apprehension of God's all-seeing, all-searching Eye, will be of excellent Use and Advantage to us at 4 times especially ; 1. Actually consider that God sees you, when your ordinarily visit one another, and at any time feast and make merry together. 2. When Buying or Selling, remember you are manifest in God's Sight, that God stands by and sees your dealings. 3. Consider this in your secret Retirements, and in your private Families. 4. Whenever we come to the publick Worship of God, let us seriously consider, that we stand in his Presence, and are in his eye. Direct. ( 5. ) That we may wisely

ly redeem the Time, let's be sure to propound a good end to our selves in all our Actions ; and do nothing deliberately, but what we can safely and freely; warrantably and comfortably ask God's Assistance in, and Blessing upon, when we go about it. Direct. (6.) We must be sure to give our selves to Prayer, as a special way in which, and principal means and help by which we may redeem and improve our Time aright. And here 1. Be careful to keep up set and stated times of Prayer : of secret Prayer, and Family-Prayer. 2. Be ready to betake thy self to Prayer, upon special, extraordinary, emergent Occasions. 3. Use thy self to frequent, suddain, ejaculatory Prayers to God. This is the Priviledg of Ejaculation, that it is a gaining of Time for the Exercise of Religion, without any prejudice or hindrance to your Calling. Direct. (7.) We must set our selves to frequent diligent reading, and serious studying of the sacred Scriptures. For 1. This is a gaining and making advantage of all that Time past which the Scripture gives us the History and Account of. 2. Our reading the holy Books of Scripture, is as well improving the present time that is imployed in this religious Duty, for, 'tis an honouring of God ; and a means of attaining divine Knowledg, heavenly Grace, and spiritual Comfort. 3. It is moreover a means and help to the right redeeming of our Time for the future. Direct. (8.) If we would effectually redeem the Time, we must give our selves to frequent and serious Meditation. See som Time apart for this Duty.

*Duty.* Think of the 4 last things especially ; 1. Of Death ; of the Day of thy own particular Death, and of the Time of the General Dissolution of this World. 2. Of the Day of Judgment. 3. Of the Joys of Heaven. 4. Of the Torments of Hell. Direct. (9.) If you would redeem the Time, you must labour to spiritualize even your ordinary worldly Employments ; and must take care that your natural, as well as civil, Actions partake of Religion. Direct. (10) If we would wisely redeem the Time, we must make a good Choice of our Friends and Acquaintance, and a good Improvement of our Company and Society with them. Direct. (11) We must remember and consider, perform and answer our solemn Sacramental Vows, and Sick-bed-Promises and Resolutions. Direct. (12) Lastly ; If we would redeem the Time, we must not give way to any Delay, but strengthen and settle our Resolution against any farther procrastination.

*The First Direction.*

**I**F ever we would redeem the Time, we must endeavour to be thoroughly convinced of the great Value, and real Worth of Time. Consider,

1. How precious Time is in respect of the Price paid for it : That our Time was bought into our Hands, *not with corruptible Things, as Silver and Gold, but with the precious Blood of Christ* : for, we had forfeited our very Lives ; and space for Repentance is the Fruit of the Death of Christ. Consider,

2. How



2. How *precious* Time is in regard of the *Use* and *End* to which it serves : how Time bringeth Advantages with it, for the compassing of the greatest Undertakings, and for the perfecting of those that are most imperfect. *Time* is not an *empty Duration* : God hath filled Time with *Helps* to *Eternity*, and with *Means* sufficient to know him the only true God, and *Jesus Christ* whom he hath sent, whom to know is *Life eternal*. Consider,

3. What *precious Thoughts* the more improved *Heathens* had of Time. *Pliny* seeing his *Nephew* walk for his *Pleasure*, called to him, and said, You might have found something else to do, you needed not have lost your *Hours* thus. It is the commendation given by *Ælian* of the old *Lacedæmonians* that they were exceeding frugal and *parsimonious* of their Time, taking care to employ it in serious urgent *Businesses*, not allowing or permitting any *Citizen* to waste and consume it in *Idleness* and *Sloth* ; or vainly to throw it away, by spending it on such Things as did not at all appear to *Minister* to any *Vertue* : For a *Testimony* of which the *Historian* gives this *Instance* ; That when it was told the *Ephory*, that the People of *Decelia* did use to walk in the *Afternoons* ; those vigilant, diligent *Magistrates* presently sent to them, to prohibit their customary *Walking* meerly to take their *Pleasure* : For they reckoned, it became the *Lacedæmonians* to get and preserve good *Health*, not by taking such idle *Recreations*, but by giving themselves to some profitable *Exercises*, which might train and fit

fit them for publick Use and Service. Were they so *thristy* only for the Profit and *Commodity* of their City? And shall not we make much of our Time, be *sparing* and saving of our hours, that we may employ them in the Worship and Service, to the Honour and Glory of our God; for the Safety and Welfare of our immortal Souls, and the *securing* to our selves a *celestial City*, and an heavenly Country? The judicious *Plutarch* acknowledges, that Time is of all the most costly *Expence*. The considering and understanding *Seneca* was more sensible than many of the Worth of Time; had himself appretiating Thoughts of it, and reproves the common Sort of Men for their great Ignorance of the Preciousness and Usefulness of it. I am apt to wonder, says he, when I hear some Men ask others to spend their Time, and bestow their Hours on them; and observe those that are thus ask'd to be so easy to part with their Time to them: 'Tis asked as a very small matter, and given away as if it were worth nothing: Men plainly play with the most precious Thing that is: But this deceives them, says he, That Time is an incorporeal Thing and cannot be perceiv'd with bodily Eies, and is therefore made of little reckoning, or no account with them. And in his first Epistle he thus complains to his Friend *Lucilius*; Where will you find me a man, says he, that sets a due Price, a right and true Estimate and Value upon his Time?

Most Men are careful of an Hour-Glass, but careless of their Hours. Men throw away their Time, because they have mean and low Thoughts

*Thoughts* of it : They know not the *Worth* of this *Jewel*, and therefore they are easily *cheat-ed* of it, and are ready to part with it upon the *cheapest terms*. Many *Christians* may learn of some of the wisest *Heathens* not to make light of their precious Hours, but to value their *Time* at an higher Rate.

4. Let those that yet have *Time* in their hands, learn to prize it, by considering, *how those that want it judge of it*. They that have quite lost their *Time*, Oh ! what would they give to redeem it ? Men too commonly little think that *Time* is of any great *Value* : I am sure the most part of us live as if we did not believe so. But I pray consider, what *damned Spirits*, and *dying Persons*, who have not made their peace with God, think of *Time*. Consider,

(1.) *What precious Thoughts* lost *damned Souls* have of *Time*, who suffer such extremity of *Misery* for slighting and abusing it. What would not they give, if it were possible, for *our Time* and Opportunities, and those *Seasons* of *Grace* which we enjoy, but do not improve ; which God indulgeth to us, but we are not thankful for, nor careful of ? What would not they offer, or yield to, to have a new *Price* put into their hands, to have farther advantages of redeeming *Time* ? Could they be admitted to live in this *World* again, and to act here *another part* ; would they ever grudge to do any spiritual *Duty* ; would they ever think any religious Exercise tedious ? would they be tired at a *Sermon*, or weary of a *Prayer* ? would

not

not they be willing to pray every Day ; till they were even *hoarse* again ; to pray till their Knees were as *hard* as the *Boards* upon which they kneeled ? Would not their *Heads* be *Fountains of Waters*, and would not they be ready to *weep out* their very *Eyes* in the confession of their Sins ? Could they be releas'd and restor'd, would they be any more *afraid* to resist the Temptations of a carnal Friend, to refuse an ensnaring Invitation, to deny a Cup immodestly pressed, and unseasonably urged ; to reprove a bold and daring Sinner, and to own and side with God and Religion in any Company whatsoever ? With what *undaunted Courage* and Resolution would they be forward to bear Witness against the reigning Sins, and common Vices of the World ? With what Force & *Violence* would they endeavour to take the Kingdom of Heaven ? and how would they labour to lead others into, and to help them on in the Way to Heaven ? How would they speak with *yearning Bowels* of tenderest Compassions to the Souls of their sinful Freinds and Relations, and seek the Conviction, Conversion, and Salvation of the sensual, worldly, careless, ungodly Neighbourhood round about them ? How would every *Word* that proceeded out of their Mouths be *Heart-deep* ? How patiently would they continue in well doing, to make sure of an endless glorious Happiness ? And how contentedly would they endure, and cheerfully suffer any thing here, to escape the intolerable eternal Torments of Hell, and to fly from the Wrath to come ? Consider further,

(2.) *What*

(2.) *What high and precious Thoughts a dying Man, who has not made his Peace with God, has of Time?*

The fore-mentioned raised Philosopher well observes the *different Judgments and Affections* of Men, in the course of a pleasurable Life, and under apprehensions of the Nearness of Death. When Men think they have Time enough, they have no regard of Time, but are extremely prodigal of it: *But look on these Men when they are sick*, says he; *If they appear in any danger of Death, you shall find them courting and crouching to Physicians, and bowing down to their very Knees*, begging the Use of their Art and Skill, to prolong their Daies, and lengthen out their Lives. Or if they fear they shall suffer capital Punishment, you shall see them ready to lay out all to save their Lives. But if, as the Number of every ones past Years may be reekoned, so, the Number of those that are to come could be assign'd, *How would they tremble*, saies he, *that should see but a few remaining, and how apt would they be to be sparing of them?*

Surely they, that have all their Lives made it their Business to drive away their Time, would at their Deaths give all the World to redeem it. What would the dying Husband give for Time to spend more spiritually with his Wife? the dying Wife for Time to spend more holily with her Husband? the dying Master, for Time to spend more godlily with his Family? the dying Parent, for Time to spend in a more religious Institution, and conscientious Education of his Chil-

Children? a *dying Neighbour*, for Time to spend in more profitable Converse with those about him? Would he intend to spend his Time, if he could live longer, in tempting his Neighbour to the Tavern or Ale-house, to drinking, or Gaming, or the like?

If God would but lengthen out such a Person's Daies, and afford him but a little more Space to amend his Life, and to lay hold on eternal Life; he would thankfully accept of it upon the *hardest Conditions*: He would be content to be the *poorest Beggar* in the Street, and to live a mean and outwardly miserable Life as long as he liv'd. He is just now departing out of this World, and immediatly going to his *own Place*? and if Time were now to be redeem'd, what would not the most *voluptuous Man* be willing to *do or suffer*? What would not the most *covetous Man* be ready to *part with* for the purchasing of it? What would not he *give* for *that Time*, which some of you, it may be, spend and *throw away* in Drinking, Gaming, Carding, Diceing, in Romances and Stage-Plaies, in idle foolish Pastimes, in Jeering and Jestling, and carnal sinful Merry-making? To what *excellent Uses* would he resolve to put his Hours, if he could enjoy any more of them? If God would grant him but *one Year of Trial more*, how little would he design to give to the World, and the Flesh; and how much to God, and Godliness, and the Offices and Exercises of *pure Religion and undefiled*? How would such an one *purpose* and *promise* to resist Temptations, to shun all Occasions and Appearances  
of

of Evil, carefully to provide for his immortal Soul, diligently to study the sacred *Scriptures* strictly to observe the *whole Lord's-Day*, attentively to hear the Word preach'd, both *in Season*, and *out of Season*; frequently to meditate of it, and constantly to frame and order his Life according to it; to pray with his Family devoutly and fervently, morning and evening; to spend some Time every Day with God, and himself, in secret: to make the purest and precisest Christians his constant Patterns and Examples; and for the future to follow and imitate those, whom heretofore he *bated and derided, nick-named and abused.*

When once Men by a *dying*, and the near Approach of their latter End does *awaken* their sleepy secure Consciences, and make the most stupid sottish Sinner begin now to be truly *sensible and serious*; with what *æstuations* and perturbations of Mind, with what anguish and aking of Heart, with what Pangs and Agonies, and fearful Tremblings; with what doleful Accents, and Passionate, piercing, moving, melting Expressions, do they *lament and bewail* their wasteful Mis-pence, and miserable Loss of all the Time of God's most *patient Trial* of them, and of all their special *golden Seasons*, and rare Advantages and Opportunities? When they take their *leave* of all about them, how *earnestly* and importunately do they exhort and urge them to be *better Husbands* of their Time and Talents? How pathetically and *feelingly* do they then advise and Counsel their Children and Servants, Friends and Relations, Neighbours

bours and Acquaintance, to *number their Daies*, to lead good Lives, to improve their Health and Strength for God, and their own and others Souls; and *timely to prepare* for Death and Judgment?

Let's consider, *some of us*, who have thought sometimes that the *Sentence of Death* has past upon us, and have look'd on such or such a Sickness as our *last Arrest* and *Summons*, what would we then have *disbursed* for a *Reprieve*? Would we not have given, with *Hand* and *Heart*, an House full of Silver and Gold, if we had it, to have been sure to have lived *another Year*, for the proving and *evidencing* the Truth and Sincerity of our Faith and repentance, by a course of Obedience, and our making a larger and *surer provision* for our comfortable Reception and happy Entertainment in the other World? Friends, we shall ere long be all of us Plac'd upon our *Death-beds*: and if we make no matter of Time *now*, if we won't value and prize it *now*. we shall *then* sure enough *highly prize* it, when alas! it will be *too late*. And if we now have *worthy thoughts* of it, we shall suffer *nothing* to rob and deprive us of it. Let's be of the *same mind* and judgment now in our *Health* and *Strength*, that we shall certainly be of in *Sickness* and *Weakness*; and not contemn and vilify that in our *Life time*, which we shall wish we had worthily esteemed, and well-improved, at the *Hour of Death*.



*The second Direction.*

If we would redeem the Time, we must often examin our selves, and call our selves to a serious strict Account for the spending of our Time.

Alas ! too many earnestly study to know and understand *all things but themselves*: they observe and take notice of *other Mens Tempers and Humors*, search and enquire into *other Mens Actions*, and read the Histories of *other Mens Lives*; and yet are ignorant of their *own Hearts* and spiritual Estates, unobservant of the Passages, and unacquainted with the particulars of their *own Conversations*. We can easily pass away the Day and the Night, the Week and the Year, in musing on a *thousand Matters*; But where is the *Man* that bestows any serious Thoughts on *himself*, that questions and interrogates his *own Heart*, and takes due notice of his *own Life*; or is at all concern'd how *his Soul* is improved, and *his Hours* employed? Certainly some of the very *Heathens* will rise up in *Judgment* against most *Christians*; for we find that they have been very famous for this Practice, of being severe in taking Account of themselves, and of their Time. *Suetonius* relates of *Titus Vespasian*, the Heathen Emperour, that remembering on an Evening, as he was at Supper, that he had done no good that Day to any one, he utter'd that memorable and deservedly commended Saying, *Alas ! my Friends, I have lost this Day.*

*St. Jerom* tells us of a wise Saying of the *Phy.*

*Pythagoreans*, That a special Care is to be had of two portions of our Time, of the *Morning*, and of the *Evening* : Of the *Morning*, to consider, and to resolve to do what ought to be done ; and of the *Evening*, to examine whether we have done what we ought.

And it is one of *Pythagoras's* golden Precepts, Never offer to give sleep to your Eyes before you have thrice run over in your Mind the several Particulars of that Day's Actions, and put such Questions as these to your self, *Where have I transgressed? what have I well done? what have I left undone, which it became me to have done?* And if thou hast done any thing, sayes he, that is *base* and unworthy, charge thy self with it, and *chide* thy self for it : But if thou hast done any thing that is good and vertuous, rejoyce and delight in it. *This makes us so very bad*, says *Seneca*, because no Man reflects upon his own Life. It may be sometimes, though seldome, we think what we are to do, says he, but what we have done, we do not think : But we are to deliberate what to do for the future, from the consideration of what we have done already. And in his third Book *de Ira*, he has an excellent Discourse to this Purpose : He says there, That the Soul is dayly to be call'd to give an Account. And he tells us of one *Sextius* : whose constant Course it was to do thus ; That, when the Day was spent, and he went to take his rest at Night, he would demand of himself ; *What evil of yours have you heeled this Day? what Vice have you resisted? in what part are you better? Anger and Passion* (says the Philosopher) *will be moderated and abated, when it knows it must day.*

ly come before a Judge: And therefore, says he, what is more excellent than this Custom of examining the whole Day past? O what a sweet sleep is that which follows after the Recognition of a Man's self? How quiet and free is a Man's mind when it is either commended or admonished, and a Man does secretly review and censure his own Manners? I use this Liberty with my self (says Seneca there in the same place) I have a dayly Tryal with my self, says he, When at Night the Candle is taken away, and all is still and silent; then I search and enquire into the whole Day, I measure and run over, I scan and consider all my Words and Deeds; I hide nothing from my self, I overlook and pass by nothing: I say to my self, you have done so and so, see you do so no more.

You see how some of the wisest and best of the very Heathen did accustom themselves to this Self-scrutiny, and took an Account of their Lives and Actions.

And many eminent, and Godly Christians to this Purpose do use *Diaries*, and dayly set down in *Journals* or Day-books the observable and remarkable Passages of their Lives. And we must do at least somewhat like it. Before we sleep every Night, let's be sure to make such a *Recollection* and *Examination* of the Actions of that Day, as may represent any thing that is remarkable to be matter either of *Humiliation* or of *Thanks-giving*.

Accustom thy self, before thou takest thy Rest and Repose, to have some private Talk, some secret Conference with thy self, to ask

ask thy self *such Questions* as these, and to use such Language as this ; What has been the *Frame* and *Temper* of my *Heart* ? what my *Carriage* and *Behaviour* this *Day* ? what the *Principles* of my *Practice* ? what the *Ends* of this *Day's* *Actions* ? Did my *Mind* *awake* with my *Body* in the *Morning* ? did I then exercise the *Consideration* of a *Man* and *Christian* ; and deliberately renew, and fix and settle my *Resolution* for the purifying and right ordering my *Conversation* ? Did I early go to *God* by *Prayer*, and in the *first place* seek the *Kingdom* of *God*, and his *Righteousness* ? *Mat. 6. 3.* Wherein have I offended or angered my good *God* this *Day* ? wherein have I injured or provoked my *Neighbour*, or hurt his *Soul*, *Body*, *Estate*, or good *Name* ? wherein have I wronged, or any way *Prejudic'd* my own *Soul* ? what proud, discontented, covetous, ambitious, malicious, revengeful *Thoughts* ? what filthy, or angry, vain-glorious, or idle *Word* ? what inconvenient, abusive, offensive, *Jest* ? what ungodly *Deed*, or unbecoming unseemly *Action* have I this *Day* been guilty of ? In what has *Satan* this *Day* taken *Advantage* against me ? or how has my own *deceitful Heart* turned me aside ? What *Degrees* of *Intemperance* have I admitted in *Meats* or *Drinks* ? what worldly *Cares* have I been distracted with ? What carnal *Fears* have I been ready to sink under ? To what have I my self been effectually *tempted* ? or, wherein have I offered to be a *Tempter* of any other ? What *Solicitation* to *Evil* have I resisted ? What *Sin* and

Corruption have I striven against? What open, careless or wilful Sinner have I seasonably and prudently reprov'd? What *Duty* have I performed? What *Grace* have I exercised? What *Time* have I employed in Closet-Devotion, in Family-Religion, in diligent following the Business of my Calling? What *Company* have I run into, or kept? What *Hours* have I spent in such Company? and to what profit or benefit to my self or others? What was my *Omission* and Neglect? what my *Sin* and Vain-ry, committed and repeated in such Society? Have I not closed this Day with a drowsy *sleepy* Prayer this Night? Am I grown any better this Week, this Day, than I was the last?

You know, at *Night*, and at the *End* of the *Week*, we usually call our *Servants* to *Account*: Let's use the same Method, and take the same Course, for a *daily*, *weekly* *Reckoning* with our *selves*. In the Close of the Day, at the End of the *Week*, let's commune with, and reflect upon our selves, and *take our selves to task*. Let's take a view, and make a survey of our past Lives; observe how our *Time* goes, watch what becomes of it, see how it is laid out, that so beholding how *useless* and unfruitful we have been, we may even be ashamed of our selves, and labour to grow more *useful* and fruitful for the future: As, *remembering from whence she was fallen*, was prescribed to the Church of *Ephesus* as a means of her *repenting*. *Rev. 2. 5.* And on the contrary, because *no man said, What have I done?* therefore every one turned to his Course, as the Horse rusheth into the

the Battle. Jer. 8. 6.

By dayly observing, examining, taking account of our selves and Ways, we shall come to *Repentance* more *speedily* and easily; and recover the *Favour* of God *immediatly*: The *Candle* that is *presently* blown in again, *offends not*: We shall have the Advantage of making to God a *fuller Confession* of our Sin, while our Sins with their Circumstances are *fresh* and recent in our Memories. And shall be *more effectually* restrained from Sin for the future, by thinking thus with our selves, *This I must account with God, and my own Conscience for before I sleep.* And by this means we shall be freed from the *Fear* of *sudden Death*, and be in a constant good *Preparation* for it: because though our Master come *suddenly*, he will not find us *sleeping*, nor surprize us in *unrepented* Sin. When in this manner we make *all even* every Night between God and our own Consciences, we may lie down in *Peace*, and take a quiet Rest and Sleep, without any perplexing *amazing Fears* of our awaking the next Morning in the other World.

Hold and maintain this Practice of Calling thy self to a dayly strict Account, and you shall certainly find and happily experience that of *A Kempis* to be a great Truth, *Thou shalt sweetly rest, if thy own Heart reprehend thee not: Thou shalt rejoyce and be glad at heart every Night, if thou hast not lost, but fruitfully spent the Day past.*

*Rodericus* relateth of *Suarez*, that he was wont to say, He esteemed that little *Pittance*

of Time, which constantly every Day he set apart for the private Examination of his own *Conscience*, more than all the other part of the Day, which he spent in his voluminous *Controversies*. And it is reported of that learned Professor of Divinity, Dr. *Samuel Ward*, that when he lay upon his Death-Bed, he profess'd he had read many Books, but had no such comfort from his reading any, as from his reading, and studying the Book of his own Heart and Life.

That is the second Direction; *Frequently call your selves to an Account*. Often Reckonings make long Friends: It holds moſt true between God and our *Souls*, between our *Consciences* and our *selves*. Reckon with God and your selves every *Evening*, how you have spent the Day fore-going, and this will provoke you humbly to beg the *Pardon* of your Sins at God's Hands, and *Power* against them; to judge, and punish, and take an *holy Revenge* upon your selves; to exercise *Repentance* for your past Failings, and strict *Watchfulness* for the future.

#### The third Direction.

That we may rightly *redeem our Time*, let *Reason* and *Conscience* have some Authority with us, and not be despised and disregarded by us. They are moſt brave generous Rules and Precepts that are given by *Pythagoras* in his golden Verses; *Never accustom thy self in any Thing to act and carry thy self irrationally*, and below a Man.

Man. And, of all things, see, says he, that you reverence, and use good Manners to your self. Let Reason rule and govern thy Passions, and Affections, and Conscience with-hold thee from being guilty of any Impiety or Impurity Absurdity or Undecency. Do nothing to put thy self to the blush, to fill thy self with secret Shame and Sorrow, and sinking Fear, for the Turpitude or Folly of thy own Actions. Take the wholesome Counsel and good Advice that Ausonius gives thee, *When thou art about to do any vile and vicious Thing, be afraid of thy self, though no body else be near thee, to be a Witness of thy Wickedness.* If the Things thou doest (says Seneca excellently) be unseemly and uncomely, what does it avail thee that none in the World know it, when thou thy self knowest it? O miserable Man, says he, if thou contemn'st this Witness within thee. And I find Lactantius citing these admirable Sayings out of him; *Thou very mad Man, what will it profit thee to have no other conscious of thy Crime, so long as thou doest carry a Conscience within thee? And again; What doest thou do? what doest thou devise? what doest thou go about to conceal? thy Keeper closely follows thee? One is absent from thee by reason of a Voyage or Journey, that he cannot observe thee: another is removed by Death, that used to look narrowly to thee: another is kept away from thee by Sickness: but Conscience sticks at all Times to thee: you can never shake off, or get rid of that.*

Put not a Slight, much less a Force upon Conscience: never use any Violence to it: never offer to baffle, and stifle, and stop the Mouth



of it: Cast not this good *Micaiah* into Prison, make it not *weary* of its Office of *warning* thee; but shew all due respects to it, and hear and obey the Voice of it.

Stand much in awe of the *Spy*, the *Register*, the faithful *Monitor* in thy Breast and Bosom. Let *Conscience* so far prevail with thee, as to restrain and deter thee from a loose and wicked, a slothful or idle mis-spending thy Time; and to spur and quicken thee powerfully and effectually to a wise and prudent, a faithful and good Improvement of it.

Do nothing but what is fairly accountable to thy considering self: follow the Guidance of thy best Reason: attend to the *Dictates* and Commands, and regard the *Checks* and controls of a well informed and enlightened *Conscience*. Timely take notice of its softer and gentler *Whispers*, lest you be disturbed, affrighted and terrified with its louder *Clamours*.

Be careful to approve your self to *Conscience*: fear the *After-reckonings* of *Conscience*: and labour to prevent and hinder the *Accusation* and *Condemnation* of an evil *Conscience*, and the Execution that will be done, the Punishment that will be inflicted, and the Vengeance that will be taken sooner or later by it. Dread the Thoughts of falling out with thy self: of being gnawn by a *Vultur*, and haunted by a *Fury* within thee; of suffering the little Ease, the sharp and severe *Bridewell*, the Reproaches and Upbraidings, the Pangs and Gripings, the Tearings and Rendings, the Lashes and Stings, the Racks and Strappadoes of *guilty Conscience*;

*science* : and value the Testimony and Approbation of the *Witness* within thee, the Acquittment and Absolution of the *Deputy-Judge* within thee ; and study to do every thing to gain and obtain the *Euge's* and Applauses, the Justification and Commendation, the Gratulation and Consolation of an honest, clear and good *Conscience*.

That is the third Direction in order to the better *redeeming of our Time* ; Let Reason and Conscience have some Authority with us, and procure some Reverence from us.

*The fourth Direction.*

If ever we would *redeem the Time*, we must live and act, and do every thing as in the Sight and Presence, and under the Eye and Inspection of God our *Judge*.

Wherever thou art, and whatever thou doest, remember and consider, that not only Conscience but God is by : and if our Heart condemn us, that God is greater than our Heart, and knoweth all things : 1 John 3. 20. that if Conscience be as a thousand *Witnesses*, God is as a thousand *Consciences* ; both for Intimacy of Presence, and Perspicacity in discerning. If we have made any proficiency in Philosophy (saies Tully excellently) we must be persuaded sufficiently, that if we could conceal all our Actions from all the Gods, and from all Men, so that they should be alwaies ignorant of them, yet we ought to do nothing covetously, unjustly, wantonly, incontinently. If a Wise Man had Gyges's Ring, saies he, which (according to Plato's Fable) would render him invi-

fible ; he should not reckon that he had gotten the least license to sin the more by it : for good Men seek to act with Honesty, not with Secrecy.

But though that which is good be to be followed for it self, for the Bonity and Beauty of it ; and that which is evil, to be avoided for the intrinsick Turpitude of it : yet the Knowledge that others may be supposed to have of our Actions, is apt to encrease our Care, and quicken our Diligence, to order and compose our Lives and Manners, without just Blame or exception of others.

It is profitable, saies Seneca, to set some Keeper over one's self ; to have some body in our Eye, whom we may suppose to be present and privy to our very thoughts : to do every thing we do, as if some body look'd on, and were a Spectator and an Eye-witness of all we did. Privacy and Secrecy tempts and persuades Men to all Evil. A great part of Offences would be removed, saies he, if there did but one stand by as a ready Witness against the Offender. But it is more awfull, saies he, to live and act as under the Eye, and in the Presence of some excellent Person, and eminent good Man. Set Carot, Scipio, Lælius before you, or some such Person, saies he, upon whose appearing the most wicked Persons would forbear their Vices : and let the Authority of these restrain you, and have Influence upon you, until you have made your self such an one that you begin to reverence your self, and dare not to do evil before your self. Nay that heathen Philosopher goes yet farther, So live with Men, saies he, as if God himself saw you, and took special notice of you. And again in another

Epistle ;

Epistle; What will it avail you to hide any thing from Man, there is nothing conceal'd and kept close from God: He looks into our Breasts, and is present in our very Minds and Hearts.

And let me moreover add what *Lactantius* produces out of *Seneca's Exhortations*, It nothing profits us to have a Conscience shut up within us, we are open to God: Let's approve our selves to him.

What rare Lectures are these from a meer Pagan Philosopher? how consonant and agreeable to the sacred Scripture? That ancient Father much admiring the high and raised Expressions falling from that incomparable Stoick, professes concerning him; He might have been a true Worshipper of God, if any one had but shewn him the right Way: and surely he would have condemned Zeno, and his Master Socion, if he had but met with a ready Guide to true Wisdom. And *Erasmus* before his Notes on *Seneca's Works*, gives this Judgment of his Writings? If you read him as an Heathen, he wrote like a Christian; if you read him as Christian, he wrote like an Heathen.

But to return to the Matter in hand: To live as under God's Eye, is more than to live as in the presence of all the good Men in the World: more than to live as in the Sight of all good Men and Angels. Well then with holy David, let us set the Lord alwaies before us. *Psal. 16. 8.* The Lord sets us alwaies before him'self; let us therefore set the Lord alwaies before our selves: for then if ever we shall work strenuously, follow our Business closely, bestir our selves to purpose, and carefully look about us, when we

really believe that our *Lord and Master* stands by us, and looks upon us. Did we but consider, that God *sees all our goings*, Job 34. 21. that he *counts all our Steps*, Job 31. 4. that he knows all our *Waies*, *our crooked winding Waies wherein we live, wherein we dy, not live* : and is *more far above Deceit, than Deceit seems above Simplicity* : (as Mr. Herbert expresses it) This Consideration would cause us to make *streight Paths*, and to *order our Conversations aright*.

If a Reverend grave Divine, a severe Magistrate, a Parent, a Master, an Husband, a Wife, a Servant, a Child, a Friend, or an Enemy stood by, beheld, and heard; you would often *forbear* many an unhandsome, uncomely, unseemly Word and Action. If you were always plac'd under *Mens Observation*, you would study to do every thing to *their Approbation* and Satisfaction. And could you spend your Time in immoderate Eating, Drinking, Sleeping, Attiring, in Swearing, Swaggering, Gaming, Sporting, Playing; vain, and frothy, and wanton Discourfing; in any idle, unworthy, ungodly Action; if you did but *imagine* at such a Time, and in such a Place, that God *was by*, and saw or heard whatever was said or done? Pray do but actually and seriously consider, that wherever you are, the omniscient and omnipresent God is alwaies *one of the Company*, and ever beholds whatever you do : and this *will restrain* you from doing Evil, and powerfully *constrain* and effectually engage you with Care and Diligence to do your Duty, to embrace and improve every Opportunity, and to  
make

make a Benefit and Advantage of it.

The Apprehension of God's all-seeing, all-searching Eye, will be of excellent Use and Advantage to us, at four Times especially.

1. *Actually consider that God sees you, when you ordinarily visit one another, and at any Time feast and make merry together.* Whenever you go to see one another: remember and consider that God sees how you spend your Time together: that whenever you meet together, God is present in your Company; he hears your Discourses, and writes down your Words; he observes and registers your Actions: He takes exact and strict Notice, how much Time you spend idly and unprofitably; how far you exceed in your Recreations, what Gluttony and Drunkenness you mingle with your Feasting. Still therefore meet together as those that can never steal or step out of God's Presence: Say and do nothing together, but what you are willing that God should see and hear. Whenever you feast, feast as before the Lord: and when you eat and drink together, eat and drink as before the Lord.

2. *When buying or selling, remember you are manifest in God's Sight:* that all you do is naked, ript open, unbowell'd, anatomiz'd, turn'd inside out-ward in the Eye of God. Consider, that God stands by, and sees your Dealings, hears the making of every contract, is a faithful Witness to every Bargain, and is privy to your Carriage in your particular Calling, to all your Breaches and Violation of commutative Justice.

Never

Never offer to *deceive Man*, because it is impossible to *deceive God*. The *Tradesman* may secretly falsify his *Weights*, and mingle his *Wares*, and ly and dissemble to get them off the better: But *God* understands his false Dealings, and discovers his deceitful Heart and Hand. Men may cunningly *cheat* and cozen their *Neighbours*, but they can't *blind* and impose upon *God*. Let no Man go beyond and *defraud*, or over-reach his *Brother* in any Matter, because the Lord is the *Avenger* of all such. 1 *Theff.* 4. 6. Let not the *Seller* abuse the Ignorance, or Credulity of the *Buyer*; nor the *Buyer* work upon the Simplicity, or Necessity of the *Seller*: let him not say, *It is naught, it is naught*; and when he is gone his way, then boast of his Penny-worth; *Prov.* 26. 14. Though such may promise themselves *Impunity* among Men, yet *God* is the *Beholder* and *Avenger* of all such.

3. Consider this in your secret Retirements, and private Families.

(1.) Consider this in your secret Recesses and Retirements, That *God* is present, looks on, and weighs and ponders all your Doings: That *God* sees the very hidden Motions, and vain Imaginations of your Hearts. He knows all your secret Designs and Projects, he beholds the most private unseemly Carriages, and filthy Deeds. He sees within thy close-drawn Curtains, though they be of Cloth, where never yet came *Morb*; (to use again the ingenious Words of the holy Mr. Herbert) Our secret Sins are set in the light of *God's* Countenance:

Pfal. 90.8. *The Darknes hideth not from him; but the Night shineth as the day: the Darknes and the Light are both alike to him, Psal. 139. 12.* And therefore let the serious Thoughts of God's Omniscience restrain and deter us from secret Sins.

When Paphnutius the Monk was solicited by an Harlot to impure Embraces, and she led him out of one Room into another, he still complained they were not yet *private enough*: At last she brought him into an *inner Room*, which was *quite dark*: and here, said she, none can see us, but God and the Devil. What, said he, do you make a *but* at that? come, carry me where neither God, nor the Devil can see me.

And so the holy Ephrem Sirus - being enticed by a Harlot to commit Lewdness with her, only desired that he might *chuse the Place*; which she agreeing to, he presently pitch'd upon the common and open *Market-place*: And when she told him *for shame* they must forbear to do it there, in the eye and view of all; he demanded of her, how she durst do that in *God's Sight*, which she would never do in *Men's*. The wise Discourses of these two religious Persons, seasonably and seriously urging and pressing the Consideration of God's Omniscience, not only repressed, but reclaimed; seriously convinced, and effectually converted; changed the *Minds*, and mended the *Manners* of those notoriously impudent Harlots.

If Satan, or his Instruments, or thy own corrupt deceitful Heart tell thee at any Time, or suggest to thee, that *no Eye* sees thee, thou mayest



mayest commit it *safely* : ask, whether they can *pluck out* God's all-seeing Eye, or *search out* any Place that is not filled with the Divine Presence, or can expunge and *dash* the *Items* out of the *Book* of God's Remembrance?

(2.) Consider this in your private Families : Then count thy self an happy Man, (says Seneca to Lucilius) when thou art able to live as it were in publick; when thy own Walls shall cover thee, not conceal thee : which for the most part we reckon our selves enclos'd with, not that we may live more safely; but that we may sin more secretly and securely. Thou shalt hardly find any one, says he, that is able to live with his Door open. Not our Pride, but our Conscience, which is afraid lest any discovery should be made, has set Porters at our Gates. We live so, says he, that to be suddenly seen, is to be taken in a Fault or Crime.

And therefore, me-thinks, it was an excellent Speech, which Velleius Paterculus relates of Livius Drusus; who, when he was about to build an House, and the Work-man offer'd him so to contrive it, that it should be every way private, and no body should be able to look into it : No, says he, but if you have any Art at all, so frame and contrive my House, that whatsoever I do may be seen by all.

O Christian, live in thy Family, as if the Eyes of all the World were upon thee; But especially walk within thy House, as having God's all-seeing Eye continually fix'd and intent upon thee. Think, O my Friends, yea, often think with your selves, that God beholds your Family-neglects and Omissions, your Family-Irregularities and

and Transgressions, your Family-Contentions and Divisions : That he observes your Walking disorderly in your House and Family : That God sees how ill you discharge your Care of Souls : that he knows in what Families Religion is laid aside, disrelish'd, discountenanc'd, derided : that he every where looks narrowly, whether Men pray in their Cloisters and Families, and read the Scriptures and good Books, and catechise and instruct their Children and Servants, and give them wholesome Counsel, and a good Example ; or behave themselves with Neglect and Contempt of these Things. There is not a Family that goes without Prayer from Day to Day, and breaks the Lord's-Day every Week, but God knows them, and takes particular notice of them. Did Men consider this, they would not suffer Profaneness and Atheism, Contention and Strife to abound in their Families, as they do.

4. And Lastly ; Whenever we come to the publick Worship of God, let us seriously consider that we stand in his Presence, and are in his Eye. Many that come to Church out of custome and Formality, and are not sensible of God's Omniscience and Omnipresence, may say with Jacob, when they come to be awakened ; Surely the Lord is in this Place, and we knew it not, Gen. 28. 16.

Let's all consider, That when we join together in Prayer, God knows our Preparations, our Affections, our Motives to the Duty, our Carriages in it. He beholds the Rovings and Wandrings of our Minds and Thoughts, and the Dead

*Deadness and Straightness of our Hearts and Affections.* Consider in like manner, that when we *hear* the Word read, or preach'd; God well understands *why* we hear, and *how* we hear: He plainly discerns how our *Hearts* work under the *Word*: He takes notice, that when you *come*, and *sit*, and make as if you heard his Word, *your Heart goeth after your Covetousness*, Ezek. 33. 38. He views all your negligent *irreverent Carriages*, and *undecent unseasonable Whispersings*. God looks upon you, when under an Ordinance you nothing but look about you, to see who are there, and what they wear.

If Men would really believe, and seriously consider this, that when they are in publick, they are in a solemn manner *before God*; they would not then be mindless and heartless, Cold and formal in Prayer: they would not be critical, careless, scornful Hearers of the Word: but they would be lively and fervent in praying, and as diligent and attentive as could be in bearing, in order to their spiritual profiting and well-living. 'Tis good, when we have so solemnly to do with God, to think of the Eye of that God with whom we have to do: This would possess us with more Reverence, and Godly Fear, in the Duties of God's Worship. If the Apprehension of the Presence of Angels in publick Christian Assemblies, be apt to compose Men to a reverent Behaviour; 1 Cor. 11. 10. much more will the Consideration of the Presence of God be able to effect it.

## The fifth Direction.

That we may wisely redeem the Time, let's be sure to propound a good End to our selves in all our Actions : and to do nothing deliberately, but what we can ask God's Assistance in, and Blessing upon, when we go about it.

1. Let's be sure to propound a good End to our selves in all our Actions. Let every Action be as an Arrow shot at a Mark. As they that sail, we must steer and direct our Course to some Star. Seneca reproves a Sort of Persons, that acted without an End in their Eye : If you ask any one of these, saies he, when they go out of Doors, Where are you going ? what are you thinking of ? He'l answer, and tell you, Truly I don't know ; but I will see some Body or other, I will do somewhat or other. They wander about without any set Purpose, and do things, not which they design'd to do, but which they lightly fell into. They lead an inconsiderate vain Course of Life, like so many creeping Ants. One may not unfitly call their Life an unquiet Idleness. And then returning home with an empty Weariness, they swear they knew not why they went out, nor know they well where they have been, being ready to ramble and wander the Day following in the same manner : and therefore let all Labour be referr'd to somewhat, saies he, respect somewhat.

Now, as it becomes both Men and Christians, let our great End and Study, our main Scope and Intention be to please, and glorifie God, in the whole Course of our Conversation. Ye  
have

have received of us, saies the Apostle, how you ought to walk, and to please God. 1 Thes. 4. 1. We desire that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing. Col. 1. 10. Whatsoever ye do, do all to the Glory of God. 1 Cor. 10. 13. Let all our Actions have their ultimate tendency to God's Glory : That God may be honoured and glorified by our selves, while our Actions, done in Imitation of God, shew forth his Vertues, 1 Pet. 2. 9. represent and recommend God lovely to the World, and are apt to procure that God be better thought of, lov'd and serv'd. And that God may be also glorified by others, by means of our Lives and Conversations, while others are actually and effectually led thereby to high and excellent Thoughts of God, and to an Admiration and Approbation of the divine Law and Holiness.

What a rare Commendation is it of those Brethren, who are stiled by the Apostle the *Glory of Christ* ! 2 Cor. 8. 23. As Christ alone is the *Glory of the Faithful*, so they ought to be the *Glory of Christ* ; to promote and advance, and be the Instruments of his Glory, by their singular Knowledge, Faith, Piety, and excellent good Life and Manners.

It is not strictly required, that in every good Work of ours there should be an actual Intention of pleasing and glorifying God : It sufficeth that such an Intention go before in the general, and be preserved and retained in the Habit : And though it be thought on in every Action, yet the Action may be rightly perform'd in the Vertue of the good Intention that went before:

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As one in a Journey goes very right by virtue of his first Intention, though he does not, every step he takes, actually think of the Place, which, when he first set out, he intended to go to. It is absolutely necessary, that we should alwaies preserve an habitual Intention of pleasing and glorifying God in every thing: yea, (as the Reverend and learned Davenant counsels well) we should alwaies endeavour these two things; (1.) That our actual Intention of pleasing and glorifying God, should, as far as may be, be retain'd or renew'd in every particular Work we do. (2.) That after our first good Intention, no evil and inordinate Intention do arise; for this will not be rectified by the first, but the former will be blemished, stained, and corrupted by this.

Let's propose to our selves the Glory of God, as the highest End of all our Undertakings: and let all our lesser and subordinate Ends be plainly reducible to the main and great End of our living. Let's still be putting this Question to our selves in what we are doing, Is this the Way to please and glorify God? If not, how dare I take so ungodly a Course, or do so unreasonable a Deed? This is the way to redeem the Time, and a Means to make our Actions able to bear the Trial, and apt to turn to a good Account.

2. Let's do nothing deliberately, but what we can freely and safely, warrantably and comfortably crave God's Assistance in, and look up to Heaven for a Blessing upon, when we go about it. Do not much matter, saies a Kempis, who is for thee, or against thee; but take great heed and

care of this, that God be with thee in every thing thou doest. Upon every Occasion think thus vvith thy self ; If I cannot take God along vvith me in vvhat I undertake ; If I cannot own God, nor expect that God should own me, guide and direct me, assist and inable, bless and prosper me in vvhat I am about ; surely this is not the way for me to redeem and improve my Time aright : I cannot spend it profitably and comfortably in such Employment.

Such a Course and Practice as this, vvould surely prevent the Rashness and Unadvisedness, the Imprudence and Folly, the Injustice and Impiety of many Actions. If thou vvouldst never venture to engage in any Action, but vvhat thou couldst own before God in Prayer, vvithout Shame and Blushing ; and durst implore the Help and Assistance of God for the Performance of, thou vvouldst certainly vvalk more accurately and exactly than formerly. When thou art going to a drinking Meeting, canst thou beg God's Blessing upon thy jovial intemperate Company-keeping ? vvhen thou art hastening to a filthy Whore-house, or going to an obscene and profane Play-house, canst thou look that God vvith a Blessing should go vvith thee ? When thou art hunting after unjust Gain, and hotly pursuing it all the Day long ; or using unlawful and indirect Courses to provide for thy self or Family, canst thou expect that God should command a Blessing upon it ? Would the intemperate, lustful, coverous, unrighteous, Person proceed according to this Direction, he vvould soon desist from his vicious Courses, and

and unvarrantable Practices. As the poor Man, vvhen he had *stolen a Lamb*, to satisfy the hungry Bellies of his Family, and having dressed it, came, of course, to *crave*, a *Blessing* upon it ; he vvas so disturb'd and troubled about it, that he could find no Rest and Quiet in his Mind, till he went and *confess'd* his Fault, and promis'd to make *Satisfaction* for the vvrong he had done.

*The Sixth Direction.*

We must be sure to give our selves to Prayer, as a special Way in vvhich, and principal Means and Help by vvhich vve may redeem and improve our Time aright. And here,

1. Be careful to keep up set and stated Times of ordinary Prayer.

2. Be ready to betake thy self to Prayer, upon special, extraordinary emergent Occasions.

3. Use thy self to frequent sudden ejaculatory Prayers to God.

These three Particulars give the proper Sense and Meaning of those Scriptures ; Praying alwaies ; Ephes. 6. 16. in all Time, or, Opportunity, as the Word is : Pray without ceasing : 1 Thes. 5. 17. Pray continually. Heb. 13. 15.

1. If we would well redeem the Time, we must keep and observe our daily set and stated Times of earnest fervent Prayer to God, and solemn serious Supplication. Thus it is our Duty to pray continually : not to employ the Whole of our Time, in Prayer, ( as of old the Euchites dream'd ) but to pray continually, in the same Sense



sense as *Mcphibosheth* was commanded to eat *Bread at David's Table continually*; 2 Sam. 6. 7. that is, not to cram, and load himself with Meat and Drink day and night, but to refresh himself there at the *set and customary Hours* of Dinner and Supper.

'Tis a general Duty incumbent on us, to *serve God all the Days of our Life*; Luke 1. 75. and therefore with the Worship and Service of Prayer in particular, which may be conveniently performed *daily*. We are directed in the *Lord's Prayer*, to pray every Day for our *daily Bread*; Mat. 6. 11. and therefore we ought more earnestly to *seek the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness*, every Day. v. 33. The *Morning and Evening Sacrifice*, strictly enjoyned under the Law to be publickly celebrated every Day, Exodus 29. 38, 39. is a plain Pattern and apparent Direction for *double Devotion every Day*: for, the legal *Sacrifice* as also the *Incense* joyn'd with it, was a Type of Prayer. Psal. 141. 2. Heb. 13. 15.

The Jews had their *set Hours* of Prayer, Acts 3. 1. & 10. 2. Our blessed Saviour has not only given us a plain Precept for *closet-Prayer*, Mat. 6. 6. but has afforded us his own Example, to lead us to the performance of solitary secret Prayer, both *Morning and Evening*. St Mark informs us, Mark 1. 35. that *in the Morning rising up a great while before Day*, or, in the first *Twilight*, he went out and departed into a solitary Place, and there prayed. And St Matthew acquaints us, Mat. 14. 23. that when he had sent the Multitude away, he went up into a Mountain,

apart to pray, and when the Evening was come he was there alone. Masters of Servants, as such, are required and charged by the Apostle to continue in Prayer, and to watch in the same with Thanksgiving: Coloss. 4. 1, 2. Which Words (considering the Context, which is wholly taken up in settling and setting forth the Christian Oeconomy) may well be interpreted and understood of performing daily Family-Prayer. Let Goverours of Families, who assume and exercise a kind of Kingly Authority in their own Families, understand and consider, that their Master in Heaven expects that they should execute the Offices, and act the Parts of so many Priests in their own Families, by offering before them the Sacrifices of Prayer and Praises to God day by day.

There are daily Personal and Family Sins to be confess'd and pray'd against; dailie Personal and Family Wants to be spread before God, in order to a supply thereof: Personal and Family Mercies daily received, and duely to be acknowledg'd every Day, Morning and Evening.

We generally find, that they that have any shew of Religion, are very observant of stated Times of Devotion: so are the Papists, and so are the Mahometans: Nay the very Heathen, guided by the dim Light of Nature, have approved and recommended this Practice: Hesiod in particular gives this as a necessary Rule, To the utmost of your Power perform your sacred Offices to the immortal Gods, both when you go to Bed at Night, and when the Morning-Light appears;

that they may bear a propitious Mind, and carry a kind and loving Heart towards you.

And it is not unworthy of some remark, that the Precepts of continuing in Prayer, and redeeming the Time, are so nearly and closely joyned together in Scripture, *Coloss. 4. 2, 3, 5.* To pretermitt and neglect, to lay aside and cast off fixed determined Times, and certain appointed Seasons of Prayer, would be to lose our Time, and quickly to lose our Religion, too. If you will not admit so much of the Form, you are not likely to maintain the Power of Godliness. If you reckon you have no call to pray, but onely when you find or feel a present inward strong Impulse, and secret powerful Inclination to it; you take a course to chase and drive away the Spirit from you, and to deprive your selves of the holy and spiritual, the sweet and seasonable Motions of it. When the usual Times of Duty return, pray, though thou hast no present sensible Motion to perform it: and pray till thou findest God's good spirit sweetly and powerfully moving upon thee, and working in thee; enlivening and enlarging thy Heart in Prayer, and enabling thee to enjoy some singular, sensible, joyful and delightful Communion with God; to exercise thy Graces in this holy Duty, and to feel thy Heart warmed and inflam'd, and thy Soul refresh'd & repair'd, before thou departest out of God's Presence.

To begin and end with God every Day, to be with the Lord *just* and *last*; to call upon God Morning and Evening; In the Morning to praise him for the Mercies of the Night past, to ask  
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*Wisdom of God to order our Conversation aright ; to beg his Favour, Presence, Guidance, Spirit, Grace, and Strength ; his Protection of us, his Beauty, or glorious Blessing upon us, and his establishing & prospering the Works both of our Heads and Hands the whole Day following : Psal. 90. 17. And in the Evening to bless and praise God for the Mercies and Favours of the Day past, to confess our Faults and Failings in it, and so to lie down with no heavy guilt of any unrepented Sin lying upon us : To pray for the Pardon and Healing of the Miscarriages of that Day, and to commit our selves and ours to the divine Keeping the Night following ; beseeching God to prevent any sinful Dreams, which might proceed from the Corruption of our Natures and Constitutions, Hearts and Imaginations, Conversations and Actions, and to spiritualize and sanctify our Thoughts and Cogitations, in the vacant Spaces and broken Hours of our Sleep : To keep and maintain the set Times of personal secret Closet-Prayer, and the stated Times of Oeconomical House-hold Family Prayer ; this is a well spending so much of our Time as is employed in that Duty ; and this is the right and ready way to redeem and improve every Day, to the Honour and Glory of God, and to our own and others Profit and Benefit, Satisfaction and Comfort : This is a likely hopeful good way to prevent or remove Miscarriages in our selves, and Disorders in our Families ; to keep every Member of our Family in their Station and Duty ; to season them all with a religious Fear, and high respect to*

God and his Ways ; and to *train* and bring up Children and Servants, to a *competent Ability* to expresse their Desires in Prayer to God, for themselves and others : to teach our *Servants*, with *Eliezar Abraham's* good and faithful Servant, to follow their earthly Master's Business with hearty Prayers to their heavenly Master for a Blessing upon it, *Gen. 24. 12.*

Be careful and diligent, wise and prudent to redeem Time for Prayer, that you may redeem Time by Prayer. Find Time sufficient to *work* this *Work of God* and so to *work out our own Salvation*, as well as to follow the *Works* and Businesses of your *particular Callings* : to attend and wait upon God in Prayer, as well as to wait upon your Customers, and to attend your secular Occasions and Concerns.

Let not worldly Cares, and *civil* or *domestick Affairs* hinder and divert thee from due Performance of Prayer in thy Family, and in thy private Closet. Though *David* had the Care of the *Kingly Government* upon him, yet his *usual Course* and Practice was, to *pray* to God *Evening, and Morning, and at Noon* ; *Psal. 55. 17.* yea, *seven times a day* did he praise God, as he himself professes : *Psal. 119. 164.* If he did not exactly and *punctually* observe so many Hours, but a certain Number is put here for an *uncertain*, yet the meaning must be, that he did it *very often* : Love *sweetened* the Duty to him, and caused him to praise God *more and more* ; *Psal. 71. 14.* to be *never weary* of praising him here, as knowing that it would be his *sole Employment* to praise him hereafter for evermore.

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Though *Daniel* was deeply engag'd in Publick Business and *State Affairs*, yet he took not any *Occasion* from these to neglect his daily Duty and wonted Service to his God : He kept his former *Course* and *Order* ; for, every day, and constantly *three Times a Day*, he *kneeled upon his Knees*, and *prayed*, and *gave thanks before his God* ; *Dan. 6. 10.* though he knew he hazard-ed his high Preferment, and endanger'd his very Life by it.

So *Cornelius* a *Centurion*, taken up with many *Martial Occasions*, yet suffer'd not himself to be taken off from his *Devotion* thereby but *prayed to God alway*, *Acts. 10. 2.* He did not do it only by fits, but daily and constantly observ'd his usual Seasons. It is reported of the famous *Bp. Andrews*, that though he had many weighty Employments as *Bishop of Winchester* and *Privy Counsellor* ; yet, his *Life* was a *Life of Prayer*, and a great part of *five Hours every day*. did he spend in *Prayer and Devotion to God*. The holy and excellent *Bp. Usher* had *Prayer* in his Family *four times a day*, In the *Morning* at six, in the *Evening* at eight, and before *Dinner* and *Supper* in the *Chappel*, at each of which he was alwaies present. *Mr. William Whately*, Minister of *Banbury*, had much *Work* lying upon him continually ; catechising and preaching twice every *Lord's-day*, and a weekly *Lecture* besides ; well studying, and usually penning his *Sermons* at large ; and yet his constant Practice was, besides *Family-Prayer* twice a day, and sometimes catechizing, to pray also with his *Wife*, and alone, both *Morning* and *Evening*.

And with what *shew* of Reason can any of you *excuse* your selves ? Have you *Time* to eat and drink and sleep ; and not only to *labour* and work, but to *play* and sport ; *Leisure* to recreate your selves, and visit your Friends, and take your pleasure ; a *Spare-Hour* to spend in discourse, and it may be to *waste* in empty and idle talk with another ? Have you *Time* to do *nothing* ? *Time* to do *Evil* ? and have you *no Time* to serve and worship God in your Families ? *no Time* for religious Retirements, and hidden Repairs to God, in your privy Chambers, and secret Closets ? Have you *so many* Sins, and Wants, Corruptions, and Temptations ? and can *no Time* be spared and set apart to seek God for the Pardon of your Sins, and the Supply of all your spiritual Wants ; and to pray to him for Strength and Power, to mortify the Corruptions with which you are infested, and to resist the Temptations with which you are assaulted ?

2. We should moreover *betake our selves to solemn continued Prayer, when we have Place and Space for such a Duty, upon the Emergency of any weighty important Business, or on any special extraordinary occurrent and urgent Occasion* ; to beg of God the prudent Conduct of our Affairs, Success in, and a Blessing upon our lawful and honest Undertakings ; Strength to go through Trials, Afflictions, and Temptations ; Freedom and Deliverance from Evils and Sufferings, felt or feared ; or to *return God thanks* for the receipt of his Mercies in any such particulars, and to *engage our selves to walk answerably*

ably, and to render suitably to the Lord, for such undeserved, and it may be unexpected Blessings and Benefits.

We read of *Abraham's* Servant, that when his Master sent him to take a Wife for his Son *Isaac*, he sought God, and said, O Lord God of my Master *Abraham*, I pray thee send me good speed this Day, and shew Kindness unto my Master *Abraham*, Gen. 24. 12. And when God had given him good Success, he worshipped and blessed God which had led him in the right Way, verse 26, 27, 48. When *Jacob* was greatly afraid of *Esau's* coming, he prayed to God to deliver him from the Hand of his Brother, Gen. 32. 9, 10. 11. When *Nehemiah* Understood the Misery of *Jerusalem*, he fasted and prayed before the God of Heaven, and intreated God to prosper him that Day, and to grant him Mercy in the Sight of the King, Neh. 4. 11. So when *Esther* was to make an extraordinary Suit to King *Ahasuerus*, she and her Maidens fasted and prayed for an happy Issue and good Event, Esth. 4. 16. When *David* was troubled with slanderous Enemies, he gave himself unto Prayer, Psal. 109. 4. And upon the Receipt of *Sennacherib's* blasphemous Letter, *Hezekiah* went up unto the House of the Lord, and spread it before the Lord, and prayed against *Sennacherib* King of *Assyria*, Isa. 37. 14, 15, 21. Christ upon his approaching Passion prayed thrice in the Garden, Mat. 26. 39, 42, 44. St. Paul likewise, when there was given to him a Thorn in the Flesh, the Messenger of Satan to buffet him, for this thing he besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from him, 2 Cor. 12. 7, 8.



How eminent have many pious Persons been for gaining Opportunities of Religious Addresses, and for that Care to improve much time in Prayer, whether upon ordinary, or extraordinary Occasions? It is the worthy Commendation of *Philippus Villerius*, the Great Master of *Rhodes*, that all the Time he could spare from the necessary Cares of his weighty Charge, from Assaults, and the natural Refreshing of his Body, he bestowed in Prayer and Serving of God; He oftentimes spent the greatest Part of the Night in the Church alone praying, his Head-piece, Gorget, and Gantlets lying by him: so that it was often said, that his devout Prayers and Carefulness would make the City invincible. *Gustavus Adolphus*, King of Sweden, would pray a Ship board, a Shore, in the Field, in the midst of a Battel. 'Tis a memorable Passage in the Life of Mr. *John Bradford*, that his continual Study was upon his Knees: and no doubt he mingled many holy Prayers with his hard Studies. Mr. *Hugh Latimer*, in the latter Time of his Imprisonment, which was at *Oxford*, from April to October, did oftentimes continue so long in fervent Prayer kneeling, that he was not able to rise without Help: And three special principal Matters, which he ever mention'd in his Prayers at that Season, were these; That God would give him Grace to stand to his Doctrine until his Death, that he might give and shed his Heart-blood in the Defence of the Gospel: That God of his Mercy would restore his Gospel to England once again, once again: He also desired with Tears, that God would preserve the Princess  
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*Elizabeth*, and make her a Comfort to his comfortless *Realm of England* : All which Requests God graciously granted : And in Answer to his first particular Desire, it was very remarkable, that his Body being open'd by the Force of the Fire, his *Blood*; which gather'd much to his *Heart*, gush'd out of his *Heart* with Violence and ran out in Abundance. *Eusebius* out of *Aegesippus*, tells us of *James* called *Iustus*, that his *Knees* were grown very callous, hard and *branny*, benumm'd and bereft of the Sense of Feeling, by reason of his continual kneeling in Supplication to God, and Petition for the People. So *Gregory* relates of his Aunt *Trucilla*, that her *Elbows* were as hard as an *Horn*, by often leaning on a *Desk* when she prayed. And *St. Jerome*; in an Epistle to *Marcella*; mentions this in the Praises of *Asella*, that by her frequent kneeling in Prayer, she had contracted such an *Hardness* on her *Knees*, as is to be found on the *Knees* of *Camels*. The same *Father* writes in the Life of *Paul the Hermite*, that *St. Anthony* entering into the Cave, found there the dead Body of that Saint in a praying Posture, upon its bended folded *Knees*, with its *Head* lifted up, and its *Hands* stretched out on high. How happy now is his *Soul* without his *Body*, whose *Body* was in a worshipping Gesture without his *Soul* !

If we would redeem the Time, we must give our selves to frequent holy Ejaculations; either mental or vocal; inwardly lifting and darting up our Petitions and Heart's Desires; or orally uttering them in some very short yet pithy Expressions:

of both which we have several Instances in Sacred Writ: *Wherefore criest thou unto me?* said God unto Moses; *Exod. 14. 15.* when Moses utter'd not a Word, that we do read of; but only used strong *Ejaculations*, inward ardent Desires and Groans. So I prayed to the God of Heaven, said holy *Nehemiah*; *Chap. 2. 4.* that is, he dispatch'd and sent up some short *Heart-prayers* to Heaven, that God would direct his Tongue, and bend and encline the Heart of the King; the King's Heart being in the Lord's Hand: He could pray no otherwise at that Time, for he was then in the Presence of the King, and in Discourse with him. And *Nehemiah, Chap. 13. v. 14, 22, 31.* and our Saviour, *Mat. 11. 25. John 12. 27, 28:* and others, did use by an holy *Apostrophe* to turn their Speech to God in vocal *Ejaculations*.

The true Christian (as a solid Divine says well) does not limit himself penuriously to a Morning and Evening Sacrifice and Solemnity, as unto certain Rent-seasons, wherein to pay an Homage of dry Devotion; but his loving and longing Soul disdain- ing to be confin'd within Canonical Hours, is frequently soaring in some heavenly Raptures, or other, and sallying forth in holy *Ejaculations*.

If thou beest a truly regenerate Person, such *Ejaculation* was thy first, and will be thy last Breathing: O see that it be the most usual Exercise of thy Life.

Great is the Benefit of holy and heavenly *Ejaculation*; which is like the keeping alive, and quickening the Fire for the Use and Service of the daily Sacrifice: If by neglect of  
this.

this spiritual Exercise, we unhappily suffer the holy Fire to go out, we can't expect that God should kindle it anew, when we go to offer the *Sacrifice* of solemn Prayer to God. By our much using *Ejaculatory* Prayer, and familiarizing our selves to praying Thoughts and Desires, and exercising our selves in spiritual Pleadings with God, our Hearts will be generally fram'd and fitted; and by *immediately previous* Ejaculatory Prayer, our Hearts will be particularly disposed and prepared for performance of *set and solemn* Prayer.

We shall also close and *come off well* from continued Prayer, with the greater *Spirituality* and Ardency of Devotion, by following at last our larger and longer Prayers with several short strong Desires, earnest and affectionate good Wishes, lively and vigorous *Heart-lifts*; such like as these; Lord, forgive the Iniquity of my holy Things. O Lord hear, O Lord forgive, O Lord hearken and do, defer not, for thine own sake, O my God. Let the Words of my Mouth, and the Meditation of my Heart be acceptable in thy Sight, O Lord my Strength and my Redeemer. Good Lord, help me to live over my Prayers, and let me not destroy my Prayers by a careless, Christless, wicked, loose and ungodly Life: Amen, Amen.

Yea, often retire, address and apply thy self to God in short Prayers and cordial *Ejaculations*, and these may supply the lack of those larger Portions of Time, which thou desirest and covetest for thy Devotion, and in which it may be thou thinkest others have advantage of thee.

Again

Again ; This is the readiest surest way to improve any *spiritual Warmth*, holy Affection or good Motion, wrought in thy Heart in the Use of Christian Conference, in Hearing, Reading, Meditation, or the like ; To send up sudden, suitable, seasonable *Ejaculatory* Prayers or Praises, while thou art under such a *lively Sence*, and in such a *Godly Frame*.

Farther ; Our often using and dayly maintaining a frequent Converse with God, in the way of these holy devout *Ejaculations*, these Aspirations and Emigrations of Soul after God, this will prove a special Help to keep our *Hearts* very *spiritual* and *savoury*, and close with God, and to get more intimate acquaintance with him, and to secure the continuance of his gracious friendly Presence with us.

This moreover is a fit and proper Means to call in and *engage Divine Assistance*, to enable us meetly to manage any temporal or spiritual Employment, and rightly to improve any Ordinance or Providence ; a direct Means to procure from God Wisdom and Grace, suitable to entertain any notable *Mercy newly received* ; to get Ease and Relief in any *sudden strait or want* ; patience under, and the Sanctification of a *surprising* and unexpected *Affliction* ; a present and approved Means to throw out the *Injection*, and to repel the *fiery Darts* of the Devil ; to gain help from Heaven against any *sudden strong Temptation*, or rising and working of any *Corruption*, and strength against our Bosom *Master Sin*, which is so apt so easily to beset us ; A means to prevent our being *un-*  
warily

warily ensnared and intangled in the Use and Exercise of our lawful Labours or Recreations; To be preserved effectually from Sin and Folly, when *cast unawares* into profane or carnal Company; to obtain Mercy and Pardon *speedily*, upon apprehension of any Infirmities, Slips, or Failings; To lift up our Hearts in *such Cases* in the Way of sudden *Ejaculatory* Prayer to God. This will save our *solitary* Hours in the *Day-time*, and will improve our *wakeful* Hours in the *Night-season*; when we cannot take our natural Rest and Sleep, then to awaken and call upon our Souls to return unto their spiritual Rest; to raise and lift up our Hearts to Heaven, and to present the Desires of our Souls to God. This is an excellent way to redeem the Time, in the *want* of a *proper Place* for *larger* Prayer: Where ever thou art, though never so far from a *Church* or *Oratory*; yet as to the Use of this kind of Prayer, thou maiest be the *Temple* of God thy self, and *pray within thyself*. Yea once more; This is an admirable way to redeem the Time, in the greatest *straits* of Time, in the *midst* of much *Company*, in the Multiplicity, Croud, and Hurry of worldly Businessses and Employments: For this is the Advantage and rare *Priviledge* of *Ejaculation*, that the *Work of God* is performed in it, and *no secular Affair* or *Worldly Occasion* hindered or retarded, impeded or interrupted by it: It is a gaining of Time for the Exercise of Religion, without any Prejudice, Let or Hindrance to your Calling: it is a *taking* Time for a *spiritual Duty*, without *taking it away* from  
your

your *civil Employment*. You may at the same instant follow your particular proper *Vocation*, and send up an holy *Ejaculation*. The *Husbandman* may dart forth an *Ejaculation*, and not make a *Balk* the more. The *Tradesman* may mind his *Shop* never the less, for minding God in such a way as this. Thy *Ejaculatory Prayers* will *sanctify*, instead of *hindring*, thy *Employments*; will influence thy *Conscience*, and keep thee from sinning in thy *Calling*, and will draw down a *Blessing* upon every *Business* and *Undertaking*.

In a Word, To give our selves to holy and heavenly *Ejaculation*, this is the way to *pray without ceasing*; 1 *Thess.* 5. 17. And surely the *Frequency* and *Number* of ejaculatory *Prayers*, will bring us in very great and large *Spiritual Gains*; and notable *rich Returns*.

'Tis a noted and approved Saying, That much *Meditation*, short *Prayers* and often, make an excellent *Christian*. The eminently learned and holy *Andrew Rivet* did much accustom and inure himself to these short *Prayers*: He used in his old Age (as he himself declares in an *Epistle* to his Brother) for many Years every Day, and often every Hour, to repeat those Words of the *Psalmist*, which were suitable to the *Circumstances* of his own Condition: O God thou hast taught me from my Youth: and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous Works. Now also when I am old and gray-headed, O God, forsake me not: until I have shewed my Strength unto this Generation, and thy Power to every one that is to come; *Psalms* 71. 17, 18.

*The seventh Direction.*

If we would redeem the Time, we must set our selves to the daily, frequent, diligent Reading, and serious studying of the sacred Scriptures :

I. This is a gaining and making Advantage of all that Time past, which the Scripture gives you the History and Account of.

Seneca advises his Friend *Lucilius* by the Peregrination of his Mind to go to the ancient Worthies, and renowned great Men, and by Cogitation to behold them, in order to an Imitation of them: This he proposes to him, as a prudent way to get *Vice* extirpated, and *Vertue* farther planted in him. He would have him by Contemplation go live and converse with the *Cato's*, with *Laelius*, *Tubero*, *Socrates*, *Zeno*, *Chrysippus*, *Posidonius*: These will instruct you, saies he, in the knowledg of things divine and humane, and will command and enjoin you to be busied and employed in some good Action. Let me advise and counsel you that are *Christians*, to travel frequently through the holy Scriptures; to keep a constant Course of attentive reading those sacred Writings, and they will give you the happy Advantage of spiritual and fruitful Converse with the *Patriarchs* and *Prophets*, with *Abraham*, and *Isaac*, and *Jacob*; with *Moses* and *Elias*; with *Noah*, *Job*, and *Daniel*; with *David* and *Solomon*; with *St. Peter*, and *Paul*, and *James*, and *John*; with *Christ*, and his *Apostles*, and the *Primitive Christians*: There you may get Acquaintance with, and make use of those rare

*Per.*



Persons, that have been most *exemplary* and *serviceable* in their Generations, and most deservedly *famous* in the several Ages of the Church of God and Christ ; and may take the Benefit of their holy *Discourses*, their excellent *Lives* and vertuous Actions.

And what the same *Philosopher* wisely *Discourses* in his excellent Book of the *Brevity of Life*, encouraging Persons to a daily familiar Acquaintance with *Zeno*, *Pythagoras*, *Democritus*, *Aristotle*, *Theophrastus* ; What he saies there to invite and engage Men to read the Writings of such as excell in useful *Philosophical* Learning, and good Arts, is more truly applicable, by way of *Motive*, to prevail with Men to give themselves to the reading of the *Pen-men* of the sacred *Scriptures*, and of the *Sayings* of those *wise* and *holy* Persons that are introduced *discoursing* therein : *There is not one of these but will call thee to hear them speaking to thee ; not any one of them, but, if you come to them, will send you away more happy, and more in love with them : none of them will suffer you to go empty-handed away from them, They may be met and spoken with, visited and conversed with by all both Day and Night. None of these will press you to die presently, but all will teach you to die well at last : None of these will waste your Tears, but will readily contribute and give their own to you, for your Use and Service, Profit and Benefit: None of their Discourse will ever be dangerous, none of their Friendship will prove pernicious, your Acquaintance with them and Observance of them will not be costly and chargeable to you. You may receive what you want, and carry away what you will from them.*

them: They will never hinder you from drawing as much out of them, as you are capable of containing. What an happy and lovely old Age is like to besal him, who has given himself into their Tuiti<sup>o</sup>n? He will have those continually at hand, with whom he may deliberate both of the smallest and greatest Matters, whom he may daily advise with about himself, from whom he may hear the Truth without Reproach, by whom he may be commended without Flattery, and after whose Similitude he may form and fash<sup>i</sup>on himself. — These will set you in the way, that will surely bring you to an happy Eternity, and will mount you up into that Place, out of which none shall be able to eject you.

This is, in a sense, a gaining of a great deal of Time that is past, and an happy converting it to our own spiritual Profit and Use. Our perusing the notable useful Histories, and instructive Passages of the sacred Pages, will, after a sort, make all that Time ours, and serve in a manner as much to our advantage, as if we ourselves had liv'd in the several Ages, in which those eminently pious Persons appeared and acted, that are recorded in sacred Writ.

2. Our Reading the holy Books of Scripture, is a proper redeeming that Time in Particular, which is denied to worldly Profit or Pleasure, and applied to such a spiritual Use: It is a good husbanding, and well improving the present Time, that is spent and employed in this religious duty, for this is our Attendance on an Ordinance of God, and in that respect an honouring of God. It is also a Means of attaining divine Knowledg, heavenly Grace, and spiritual Comfort.

( 1. ) Divine

(1.) *Divine Knowledge.* By reading the *Scripture* we may be taught of God, and come to be acquainted with the *Mind* and *Will* of our supreme Ruler and Governour, with the righteous *Laws* of our Creator and Redeemer : There we may find a *Light unto our Feet*, and a *Lantern unto our Paths* ; *Psal.* 119. 105. a *Pillar of Fire* by Night, to conduct us through the Wilderness unto *Canaan* ; a *Star* still before us, to lead us unto *Christ*. From thence we may receive suitable and seasonable Information, Resolution, Direction, if with holy *David*, we take God's *Testimonies* for our *Counsellors*, *Psal.* 119. 24. The *Scriptures* are apt to preserve, and powerful to reduce Men from erroneous Opinions : as *Junius* was mightily wrought upon, and with clear Conviction and full Satisfaction recovered out of *Atheism*, and converted to the Truth, by reading the *Beginning* of *St. John's Gospel*. The *Scriptures* are able to make us wise unto *Salvation* ; *2 Tim.* 3. 15. to make us so wise, as to become truly good. For,

(2.) Our reading the *Scripture*, is a means of obtaining heavenly Grace. The holy *Scripture* is apt to terrify and affright the Sinner out of the Way of Sin. The pure and clean Word of God is able to make thee pure and clean. The holy, just, and good Law of God is able to make thee holy, just, and good. *St. Austin*, in his younger Years, was an incontinent Person ; but being at length admonished by this Voice, *Tolle, lege ; tolle, lege* ; take up the Book and read ; he presently caught up and opened *St. Paul's Epistles*, and happily first cast his Eyes upon these Words,

*Rem.*

Rom. 13. 13, 14. Not in Rioting and Drunkenness, not in Chambering and Wanton-<sup>ness</sup>, not in Strife and Envy, But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not Provision for the Flesh, to fulfil the Lusts thereof: With which his Heart was powerfully affected, and touched to purpose. I had no need to read any further, saies he, How sweet and pleasant did I presently find it to want those trifling Pleasures of Sin? How glad was I now to let go quite, what a little before I was so much afraid to lose? Thou didst make those seeming sweetnesses vanish, O Christ Jesus, who art the true and highest sweetnes<sup>s</sup>, and didst come thy self in their Room & Stead sweeter than all the Pleasures in the world. The Word of God's Grace is that holy Seed of which you may be born again; 1 Pet. 1. 23. and is able, when once you are truly converted from Sin and the World to God, to build you up, and to give you an Inheritance among all them which are sanctified, Acts 20. 32.

(3.) Our reading the Scripture, is a ready Way, and proper Means of finding spiritual Peace and Comfort. That Place of Paul, was truly to me the Gate of Paradise: So said Luther of the 17th Verse of the first Chapter to the Romans, The Righteousness of God is revealed in the Gospel from Faith to Faith: as it is written, The Just shall live by Faith. Mr. Billney, or rather St. Bilney (as Father Latimer did not stick to stile him) that holy and blessed Martyr of God, that suffer'd Death for God's Word's sake, was raised and revived, cheered and refreshed by the 15th Verse of the first Chapter of the first to Timothy: He confesses of himself,

self, that when the New Testament was first set forth by Erasmus, he was drawn to buy it, more in consideration of the good *Latine of that Edition*, than out of any regard to the Word of God, (of which he was utterly ignorant at that Time) And, by the Providence of God, he fell at first reading on this Sentence, *This is a faithful Saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the World to save Sinners; of whom I am chief.* O this saying of Paul, was a sweet and comfortable Saying to me, says he: This one Sentence, God inwardly teaching and instructing me, did so exhilarate and comfort my Heart, which before was wounded and ready to despair, through the Conviction and Sense I had of my Sins; that I felt immediately such a marvelous Tranquillitie and Gladness within me, that the Bones which had been broken did rejoyce: and from this Time the Scripture began to be sweeter to me than the Honie and the Honie-comb. As Adam and Eve went about in vain to cover their Nakedness with their Fig-leaves, and were never quieted till they had believed the Promise of God, that the Seed of the Woman should break the Serpents head, so neither could I be healed, says he, of the Stings and Bitings of my Sins, before I was taught of God that Lesson of which, Christ speaks, Joh. 3. 14, 15. As Moses lifted up the Serpent in the Wildernes, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have eternal Life.

Thomas a Kempis is said to have uttered, and to have written this Sentence in his Books, I have sought for Rest every where, but have found

it no where, except in a corner alone with a little Book. The Bible is that blessed Book, which will either alone, or above all other Books afford a suitable seasonable Rest unto our Souls.

And now these Things considered, is it not well worth the while to bestow your Time and Pains in reading and studying the sacred Scriptures?

3. It is moreover a Means and Help to the right redeeming of our Time for the future: For, here in the Scripture, we have the plainest Precepts given us, to oblige us to take due Care of our Time; the best Examples and worthiest Patterns of Redemption of Time set before us, in the Servants of God, and in the Son of God; and have here afforded us the strongest Motives and Encouragements to it, and the most prudent Instructions and proper Directions about it: For, all that has been hitherto discoursed concerning it, has chiefly been fetch'd from, and drawn out of the holy Scriptures.

And these divine and sacred Writings, will not only teach and instruct you, but also inwardly dispose and qualify, fit and enable you to make the best Improvement of your remaining Time, by converting and transforming, regenerating and renewing, purifying and sanctifying you: By giving you a new Nature, they will enable you to lead a new Life.

And therefore be sure to redeem some competent Time for reading of the Scripture, that you may the better redeem the Remainder of your Time by reading of the Scripture. The noble *Æthiopian Eunuch* would lose no Time, but

as he was travelling, and *sitting in his Chariot*, he read *Esaia's the Prophet*: *Acts 8. 28.* And (as *St. Chrysostom* well notes) if he was so religiously employed in a *Journey*, what a diligent Student of the Scripture was he at *home*? yea though he found what he then read to be to him difficult and *obscure*, yet he would not lay that holy Book away, which he did not at present well understand. We must esteem reverently of the *Word* (saies the judicious *Hilderfam*) though we cannot at the first reading or hearing of it profit by it, or discern what use it may serve us unto. The *Jews* were so exactly versed in the Old Testament, that *Josephus* gives this Testimony of them, Every one of our Nation being demanded of our Laws, can answer as readily as he can tell his own Name. The *Bereans* are commended for spending their Time every Day in searching the Scriptures, *Acts 17. 11.* It is the honourable Character of *Apollos*, that he was mighty in the Scriptures, *c. 18. v. 3, 15.* one that had a great Insight and Skill in the Scriptures of the Old Testament: But *Aquila* and *Priscilla* ordinary Tent-makers, had attained to such a measure of Knowledge in the Gospel, that they were able to instruct an eloquent *Apollos*, and to expound unto him the way of God more perfectly. *v. 26.* *Timothy* had known the holy Scriptures from a Child, *2 Tim. 3. 15.* *Tertullian* after his Conversion was taken up night and day in reading of the Scriptures, and did with great Pains get much of them by heart, and that so exactly, that he knew each Period. *Origen* having this daily Task set him by his Father, to rehearse

hearse unto him some Portion of *Scripture*; He  
 though a *Child*, not only committed the Words  
 unto his *Memory*, but inquired into the *Sense*  
 and *Meaning* of them; and diverse Times  
 would gravel his *Father* with the Questions  
 which he propounded to him: And when he  
 was grown to *riper Years*, he spent much of the  
*Night* in meditating on the holy *Scriptures*.  
*Erasmus* gives this notable Testimony of *St. Je-*  
*rome*, *Who*, saies he, *did ever learn by heart the*  
*whole Scripture, imbibe, concoct, handle it, medi-*  
*ate upon it as he did?* This very learned,  
 and holy *Father* did moreover inflame and stir  
 up diverse noble Matrons of his Acquaintance  
 at *Rome* to an earnest and constant Study of the  
 divine *Scriptures*, exhorting and urging those  
 holy Women not to lay the *Bible* out of their  
 Hands, until being overcome with Sleep, and  
 not able any longer to hold up their Heads,  
 they bowed them down, as it were to salute the  
 Leaves below them with a Kiss: And by his  
 instruction of them, and interpretation of the  
*Scriptures* to them, he assisted and promoted  
 their pious Endeavours in those sacred Studies;  
 that it might be the greater shame for any *Bishops*  
 in any wise to neglect those sacred Books, which  
 were so often read and so well understood by the  
 weaker Sex. And he attests particularly *Mar-*  
*cella's* Industry, and great Proficiency, in his  
*Epitaph* of her, expressing himself in these  
 Words concerning her; *Because I was at that*  
*Time of some Repute and Note*, saies he, *for the*  
*Study of the Scriptures, she never met with me but*  
*still she would be putting some Questions to me a-*  
*bout*



*bout the Scriptures* : And he further adds there; *Whatever by long Study was gathered by me, and turn'd as it were into my Nature by continual Meditation, all that she pick'd out, tasted, learn'd, and possess'd* : So that after my departure, if any Controversy arose about the Testimony of the Scripture in any Matter, they had recourse to her as a Judge therein. Prosper was assiduous in reading the Scripture, and usually had the four Evangelists in his Hands. Venerable Bede read the Scriptures with such Devotion and Affection, that he would often weep in the reading of it, and would conclude his reading of Scripture with Prayer. The good Emperour, Theodosius Senior wrote out the whole new Testament with his own Hand, and read some Part of it every day ; Theodosius the second dedicated and consecrated a good Part of the Night to the Study of the Scriptures : to which end he had ( as Nicephorus relates ) a Lamp so artificially made that it constantly supplied it self with Oil; that none of his Servants might suffer any Trouble upon those Occasions. He learned much of the holy Scriptures without Book, and when he met and confer'd with the Bishops he expounded and explain'd obscure and knotty Places of Scripture, as if he himself had been a Person in holy Orders. Maccovius reports of George Prince of Transylvania, that he had read over the Bible seven and twenty times. And it is storied of Alphonsus King of Aragon, that ( notwithstanding all his Princely Affairs ) he read over the Bible with a large Comment, some say ten, others affirm, fourteen times. Bonaventure wrote out

out the Bible *twice* with his *own Hand*, and had most of it *by heart*. *Antonius Waleus* in his younger Years imprinted much of the Scripture in his Mind, and when he was old could repeat without Book the Epistle to the *Romans*, the second to the *Corinthians*, to the *Galathians*, *Ephesians*, and *Philippians*. *Zuinglius* wrote out *St. Paul's Epistles*, and got them *by heart*. *Thomas Cromwel* (afterward *Earl of Essex*) in his Journey going and coming from *Rome*, learned the Text of the whole *New Testament* of *Erasmus's Translation without Book*; which was a Means of bringing him to the Knowledge, and Savour, and Love of the Truth. *Bishop Ridly*, in his Letter of Farewel to his Friends, bidding farewel to *Pembroke-Hall*, does thus attest his own practice, with the comfortable Fruit and Effect of it: *In my Orchard* says he, *the Walls, Buts, and Trees, if they could speak, would bear me witness, I learned without Book almost all Paul's Epistles, yea and all the Canonical Epistles, save only the Apocalypse; of which study although in time a great part did depart from me, yet the sweet smell thereof I trust I shall carry with me into Heaven: for the Profit thereof I think I have felt in all my Life-time ever after.* *Dr. Gouge* did tie himself to read every Day *fifteen Chapters* in English out of the Bible, *five* in the Morning, *five* after Dinner before he fell upon his other Studies, and *five* before he went to bed; which course he first took up when he was a young Student in *Kings Colledge* in *Cambridge*. He was often heard to say, that when he could not sleep in the Night

time; he used in his Thoughts to run through divers Chapters of the Scripture in order, as if he had heard them read to him. The like Practice he used in the Day time when he was alone, whether within Doors, or abroad; for which end, he wrote in a little Book, which he always carried about him, the distinct Heads of every particular Passage in every Chapter of the Bible, that so, when in any Place he meditated on the Word of God, and was at a loss, he might presently find help by that little Book. By this means he made himself so expert in the Text, that if he heard any Phrase of Scripture, he could presently tell where it was to be found. And besides all this, he had his set Times of Study for understanding the meaning of the more difficult Places of Scripture. Mr. Jeremy W. itaker usually read all the Epistles in the Greek Testament twice every fortnight. Mr. Ignatius Furdain read the Bible above twenty Times over, and that with special Observation (as appeared by the Asterisks, and marks in the Bible which he used) making particular Application to himself. Bp. Usher had two Aunts, who, by reason of their blindness from their Cradles, never saw Letters, and yet taught him first to read. Dr. Bernard tells us, that their readiness in the Scripture was marvelous, being able suddenly to have repeated any part of the Bible. I have read of one, who was so conscientiously covetous of redeeming Time for reading of the Scripture, that being a Prisoner in a dark Dungeon, when a Light was brought to him for a little Time to eat his Diet, he would

would pull out his *Bible*, and read a Chapter, saying, he could find his Mouth in the dark, but not read in the dark.

O mind the *Scriptures*, in imitation of these and the like excellent *Examples*. Give attendance to reading, 1 Tim. 4. 13. Search the *Scriptures*, as Christ commands, John 5. 39. As Diggers in Mines, with much Labour and Pains do search for Veins of Gold and Silver in the Bowels of the Earth; So labour diligently to dig deep in the rich and golden Mines of Scripture for hidden Treasures of saving Truth. Can you use your Eyes, exercise your Reason, improve your Hours in a better Employment? Content not thy self with a slight and cursorie reading, but get a right and good understanding of these sacred Oracles. Read them with Prayer to God, before and after the reading of them. Read them with the Help of the same Spirit that wrote them: Read them, and hear the Voice of the blessed Spirit speaking in them. Read receive, and keep the Word in an honest and good Heart, (Luke 8. 15.) Hide the Word of God in thy Heart, with David, (Psa. 119. 11.) as a precious Jewel and Treasure; as the Law was kept in a Chest or Ark: (Exod. 25. 21.) Let the Word of Christ dwell richly, copiously, plentifully in thee; (Coloss. 3. 16.) and in this manner make thy Heart *Bibliothecam Christi*, the Library of Christ; as St. Jerome tells us *Nepotian* did, by his constant reading, and daily Meditation.

Read the *Scriptures*, and fully assent to the Truth and Goodness of them: Read them, and

feed and feast upon them : With the Prophet Ezekiel, Chap. 3. v. 1. 3. eat, and fill thy Belly with this Roll ; 'twill be in thy Mouth as Honey for sweetness. Do not only take the Scriptures into thy Hand, and get them into thy Head, but let them be deeply rooted in, and fairly printed upon thy Heart : Read them, concoct and inwardly digest them ; do not only retain them in thy Memory, but turn them into a new Nature.

Do not offer to deal with the Scriptures, as little School-Boys do with their Nuts, who often get them only to play with them, having no Mind or intention at all to crack the Shell, and to tast the Kernel of any of them. Read and regard the Scriptures, not only to get a notional Knowledge of them, and meerly to make them matter of Discourse, and of Dispute, but with an honest purpose to profit in Piety, and practical Knowledge, by the frequent reading, and constant studying of them.

Read, and receive the Scripture, not as the Word of Men, but (as it is in truth) the Word of God : 1. Theff. 2. 13. This will make all its Commands more strong and powerful, more sweet and acceptable, to think very seriously with thy self, that they are the Commands of God, who has Authority to command us ; and of a good God, who shews us much Love in his Commands, as he does in his Promises ; who gave his Son to die for us, and therefore we may be sure, will command us nothing, but out of Love, and for our good ; nothing but what will some way serve to fit us for, and bring

bring us to that Glory and Happiness, which his Son has dearly purchas'd for us. This also will mightily *strengthen* your Faith in Scripture-Promises, to consider that they are God's Promises, who *understands* what he promises, is true and faithful, and *cannot lye*, and is able to perform whatever he promises, be his Promises never so large & great. And this will render Scripture-Threatenings very terrible, and cause you to tremble at them, and stand in awe of them; to believe and consider that they are God's Threatenings, who is arm'd with Omnipotency, and able to execute to the utmost the most dreadful Threatnings that are denounced in his Word.

O bless and praise the good and holy Name of God, that you are not left to the conduct of your purblind short sighted Reason, to the faint Light of the Candle within you, to the natural Darkness and Blindness of your carnal Minds, and corrupt Hearts; that you are not guided with the *Turkes* by a ridiculous *Alcoran*, nor with the *Jews* directly to follow a few curious *Rabbines*, nor with the *Papists* enslaved to humane, unwritten, uncertain Traditions; But that you have the Bible open and intelligible in the *English Tongue*.

Highly prize and value the *Scriptures*, and read them with Thankfulness, Love, Joy, and Delight, as the best Book you can possible read in the whole World, the most incomparable Writings, which clearly and certainly declare the infinite Love of God, and seasonably bring the glad Tidings of a Saviour to lost and undone Mankind; which shew and discover to a mis-

able Sinner the only happy way and *means* of firm *Reconciliation* to an offended Deity, and *bring Life and Immortality to light* ; which are God's publick *Act of Indemnity*, and his free Grant of a full Pardon, and of eternal Salvation to the penitent Believer. Will you not Prize and use the Word of God, that *incorruptible Seed*, of which you are, or may be born again : and have frequent recourse to that Word, which is the *sincere Milk*, and *strong Meat*, by which you may grow and be daily nourished: the *Wine*, with which you may be refreshed when weak ; the *Phisick*, with which you may be cured when sick ; the *Sword of the Spirit*, with which you may defend your selves when assaulted, and resist and repel your spiritual Enemies ? Will you not readily and gladly repair to the *Precepts* which *counsel* you in all your Doubts, and *quicken* you in all your Deadness ? and get and keep a spiritual Acquaintance with those *exceeding great and precious Promises*, that strengthen and stay, relieve and refresh, support and comfort you, in all your Sorrows and Afflictions, Troubles and Tryals, Dejections and Heart-breakings, Disquietments and Discouragements ?

Me-thinks, a Man should never take up the *Bible*, when he reads in *private*, but with the greatest *Comfort* and *Joy* that can be, and should say within himself, Here's that which very plainly proposeth the most *excellent End*, and with all the most proper and *sure Means* to reach and attain it ; which clearly holds forth a *sufficient Rule* of Faith and Life ; which plentifully affords me most admirable *Precepts*,  
and

and most select exact *Patterns* of exercising Graces and performing Duties, most rare *Exemplars* of strong believing and holy Living ! Here's that which contains the *grand Charter* of all my Spiritual and Heavenly Priviledges ! Here's that that keeps me from *Horror* and *Despair*, notwithstanding all my *Sin* and *Guilt* ! Here's that that *teaches* me how to *Live*, and that makes me *able* to think of *Death*, without sinking and *dying* at the Thoughts of it ! Here's that that makes me hold my *Head* above *Water*, in the *blackest Hour*, and saddest Condition that can befall me !

Love and delight in the *Scriptures*, chiefly and especially for their *Sanctity* and *Purity*, because they reveal and discover the holy Nature and Law of God, the Necessity and Beauty of Holiness, the Evil, Folly and Danger of Sin, and are apt to win and draw us off from Sin, and to bring us to a real universal Conformity to the Will of God, and to a Participation of the Divine Nature, an happy Participation of God's Holiness. And apply thy self to the daily reading and diligent studying of the *holy Scriptures*, with a sincere Desire to be made really *holy in Heart and Life* by them; to be transformed and renewed, assimilated and made *like to God* by them ; to be *conformed* to Scripture-Precepts and *Examples* ; and to gain a *Frame of Heart*, and a *Conversation* and *Course of Life* every way becoming the Gospel of Christ. Whenever thou takest the *Bible* into thy Hand, to read a Chapter, or any Portion of Scripture, lift up thy Heart to God, and say, now let me be made *clean through the Word* which thou



shalt speak unto me, *John* 15. 3. Now let me be sanctified through thy Word of Truth and Holiness, *Chap.* 17. 17. Now let me gain some Degree of Grace, and make some Improvement and Proficiency in Holiness, by thy holy Word, by this sacred Writ.

Allot and allow, and *ordinarily* employ some Portion of Time *every day*, for reading and considering the holy *Scriptures*. If we don't in a manner *task* our selves *usually* to observe some certain *set Times* for this Use and Purpose, our *slothful Hearts* will easily admit yea, catch at any *trifling Excuse* to put by the Performance of this Duty; and by Degrees we shall be drawn to an *habitual Neglect* of it. We should therefore charge and enjoin our selves, not to dispence with our *stated Hours*, but upon very necessary and *just Occasions*; and in such Cases be very careful, that what we are *forc'd* to omit at such a Time, we faithfully and honestly endeavour to *supply* and make up another.

It is convenient to read, *commonly*, if it may be, some portion of Scripture, every Morning and every Evening. A worthy Divine well observes, that our reading some Scripture in the Morning, will be a good *Antidote against the Infection of those Corruptions, which we live amongst*, and is apt to fortify us against the *Temptations of the ensuing Day*; as those who live where there is any Contagion, do usually drink something in the Morning to prevent Infection. And our reading the Scripture in the Evening, will be a means to compose our Minds, and furnish us with matter of Meditation for the Night-season;

*as Cattle feed towards the Evening, that they may have something to ruminate or chew over again, when they lie down to take their Rest.*

That nothing may prove an Hindrance and impediment in this Employment,

1. *Redeem the Time from unncecessary worldly Bu-  
sinesses ; Nay, let no ordinary Occasions of your  
Calling make you generally careless and negligent  
of the sacred Scriptures. Do not idly pretend  
want of Leisure to read the weightiest Matters in  
the World, things of greatest Importance and  
nearest Concernment to your immortal Souls.  
They that enjoy much Leisure from worldly  
Affairs, God expects that such should employ  
and bestow more of their Time in this spiritual  
Exercise : Yet they that have fullest Business,  
and fewest spare-hours, cannot wholly be exemp-  
ted from this Duty. 'Tis very remarkable,  
that the King himself was expressly command-  
ed to write him a Copy of the Law in a Book;  
Deut. 17. 18, 19, 20. To write out the Book  
of Deuteronomy, which is a Compendium of the  
Law ; yea, to write out the whole Pentateuch,  
says Grotius ; to write it with his own Hand, says  
Philo, that the divine Precepts might be the bet-  
ter imprinted and fastened in his Mind : It was  
to be with him, and he was to read therein all the  
Days of his Life ; notwithstanding the Multipli-  
city and Greatness of the Affairs of his Kingly  
Office.*

2. *Redeem the Time from fruitless Pleasures,  
from Play-Books, Romances, Fanciful Poems, feign-  
ed Stories, common Histories, witty or elegant Speech-  
es. Never suffer these, or the like, to fill your*

*Reas,*

*Hands,*

*Hands*, to entertain your *Eyes*, to please your *Phantasies*, to get into your *Hearts*, so as to keep the sacred *Scriptures* and divine *Oracles* out of your *Hands*, and *Hearts*. *Alexander* would find Time to read *Homer*, even in the *Camp*; and chose to lay up *Homer's Poems* in a most precious *Casket* taken out of the *Spoils of Darius*. And the Emperour *Ælius Verus* was so in love with *Ovid de arte amandi*, as to read it in his *Bed*, and to lay it under his *Pillow*, when he went to sleep: But these were utterly ignorant of the *Scriptures*: O let not us *Christians* have such strong *Affections* for any *profane Writings*, as by means of them to be taken off from perusing and studying the *Scriptures*, which were given by *Inspiration of God*, and are every way profitable to the *Edification and Salvation* of our *Souls*. *St. Austin* confesses it as his great *Folly and Fault*, that in his unconverted State, the *Scripture Stile* was a mean and contemptible thing in his *Eye*, and not to be compared for *Dignity with the Eloquence of Tully*. And *Dr. Bernard* relates of *Bp. Usher*, that in his younger Years, in the Times of his private *Sequestration* and strict *Examination* of himself, he lamented his too much love of his *Book and humane Learning*, that he should be as glad of *Munday* to go to that, as of the *Lord's Day* for his *Service*.

3. We should take care to redeem the Time from the most plausible taking *Treatises of moral Philosophers*, whose *Precepts* commonly make Men grow more in *Knowledge* than in *Goodness*: We have an Account indeed of one *Phedon*, and one *Polemon*, that were famous *Converts* to  
Phi-

*Philosophy*, and were reclaimed and reduc'd from a very luxurious and impure Life by *Socrates* and *Xenocrates*: But what vast Numbers, and great Multitudes, have not only been brought to alter their *Opinions*, but have been really recovered from the inward Love and Liking, as well as the outward gross Practice of Sin and Vice, by reading and ruminating on the Writings of the Old and New Testament? *St. Austin* declares, that *Plato's* Writings have not the Visage and Colour of that Piety, that is apparent in the sacred Scriptures. The heathen Philosophy has nothing of that holy Nature, and transforming Power, which is to be found in Scripture-truth; which has a rare Efficacy, not only to civilize, but to sanctify. The Wisdom of Philosophers (says *Lactantius*) it does not cut up Vices, but only covers them: But a few divine Precepts, says he, do so change the whole Man, and putting off the old make him every way such a new Man, that you would not know him to be the same Person.

The most improved Discourses of heathen Moralists are also short in the relief and comforts which they offer to afford to troubled Minds. If you peruse the Writings of all the Platonick Philosophers, *St. Austin* will tell you, you can never find such strong Cordials in any of them, as those which the Gospel exhibits and holds forth to you: you can never hear there any calling and crying to you: Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Nor do the Writings of the most raised sublime Philosophers, furnish and fortify a Person with any Motives and Arguments, to help him quietly

quietly and contentedly to bear the *Afflictions* and *Calamities* of *this Life*; like those of the *perfect Pattern* of *Christ's patient*, though *undeserved*, *Sufferings*; and the great and gainful *Reward* in *Heaven*, that *exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory*, proposed and promised in the *Gospel* of *Christ*, to those that *endure the Evils* and *Sufferings* of this present *Life* with *Christian Patience*, 2 Cor: 4. 17. *Baptista Mantuanus* declares it as his comfortable and constant *Experience*, that his recourse to the *Scripture* was on all *Occasions* a *present happy Remedy* against all *Griefs* of *Body*, *Anxiety* of *Mind*, and *Sadness* of *Soul*; and that he *never fail'd of Ease*, in taking this course, and using *this means*. Once more;

4. We should religiously *redeem the Time*, not only from meer *Philosophical* Writings, but from the *Ecclesiastical*, *Theological* Writings of Men *not immediately inspired*, to spend in reading over the *Bible*; which is the *infallible Word* of *God*, and is *peculiarly* accompanied with the *special Operation* of the *Spirit*; the *Word* of *God* being *vehiculum Spiritus*, the *Charet* in which the *Spirit of God* rides in *Triumph*. This made *Luther* solemnly profess, that he *hated the Books* set forth by himself, and often wished them *perish'd* and utterly *abolish'd*, lest they should be a means to divert and withdraw Men from the reading of the *Scripture*, which alone is the *Fountain* of all *spiritual, divine* and *heavenly Wisdom*: for fear of this, he could (like *Saturn*) have *eaten up his own Children*; destroyed his *own Works*, the *Fruit* and *Issue* of his *Mind*.

Thus,

Thus, thus redeem and gain the Time from *other Things*, to apply it to the busy study of the *Scriptures*: Let the *Scriptures* have the *Preeminence* above all Books and Writings in the World. Keep a *constant course* of serious reading those divine Writings: read them frequently, read them *unweariedly*. It is a common proverbial Speech, says Luther, that the *Letters of Princes* are to be read three times over; Surely then the *Divine Letters*, God's *Epistles* (as Gregory calls the *Scriptures*) are to be read seven times thrice, yea, seventy times seven; they are to be read even a thousand times over; they are to be read infinitely, because they are the divine *Wisdom*, which cannot be comprehended presently at first sight. If any one read them by the by as things known and easy, he deceives himself.

Is it not Time well spent in often and narrow searching into those things, which are of so strange and weighty an importance, that the *Angels* themselves desire stooping down to look, to peep and pry into them? 1 Pet. 1. 12. In gaining *Knowledge* and *Understanding* of the *Wisdom*, *Counsel*, *Mind* and *Will* of God? In acquainting our selves with the *Rule* of our *Lives*, in learning the *Laws* of the *Kingdome*, and studying the *Statutes* of *Heaven*? in using the *Means* of getting and growing in saving *Grace*; in opening and reading our *Elder Brother's Will* and *Testament*; in sucking those full *Breasts* of strong *Consolation*, and in drawing the refreshing *Waters of Life* out of those *Wells* of *Salvation*?

Let it be the *shame* and *sorrow* and trouble  
of

of our Souls, that we have been *careless* of the *Scriptures* in *any part* of our whole Lives. Dr. Robert Harris, President of Trinity-Colledge in Oxford, was not a little afflicted to his dying Day, that even in his *Childhood* he was more willing of *play*, than of *reading* the *Scriptures* to his pious Parents at their Call.

And let's lament, and sadly lay to heart the *slight Thoughts* that *too many* have of the holy *Scriptures*, and their gross neglect and great disregard of the precious and venerable Book of God. Mr. Fuller, in his History of the University of Cambridge, does give us a Relation of an excellent Meditation of the Reverend Dr. Richard Holdsworth, which the Relater himself heard drop from him a little before his expiring: I admire, says he, at David's gracious Heart, who so often in Scripture, but especially in the 119th Psalm extolleth the Worth and Value of the Word of God; and yet Quantillum Scripturæ, how little of the Word had they in that Age? the Pentateuch, [ or five Books of Moses ] the Book of Job, and some of the Hagiography [ a little of other holy Writ. ] How much have we now thereof since the accession of the Prophets, but especially of the New Testament? and yet, alas! the more we have of the Word of God, the less it is generally regarded.

Lastly; let's do our honest and utmost endeavour to win and draw others on to the Love and Liking, to the reading and studying of the sacred Scriptures: Let them be in thine Heart, and teach them diligently unto thy Children, and talk of them when thou sittest in thine House, and  
when

when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up, Deut. 6. 6, 7. Teach them, thy Sons, and thy Son's Sons, c. 4. v. 9. Command thy Children, Gen. 18. 19. And engage thy Household and Servants to read the Scriptures, and to mind what they read, and allow them Time for so necessary a Duty ; and let not any in thy Family want a Bible for their Use and Benefit. In all the Wills made by the forementioned Dr. Robert Harris, this Legacy was alwaies renewed, *Item, I bequeath to all my Children, and their Childrens Children, to each of them a Bible, with this Inscription, None but Christ.*

*The eighth Direction.*

If we would effectually redeem the Time, we must give our selves to frequent and serious meditation.

Meditation is more excellent than meer Study ; for the End of Meditation is not the filling our Heads with Notions, but the quickening of our Affections, and strengthening of our Resolutions ; the warming of our Hearts, and putting them upon Duty ; the bringing them to an inward lively Sense of God, to the Love and Fear of God, to Thankfulness and Obedience to him, to the Enjoyment of him, and Fellowship and Communion with him.

Let's use and inure our selves to raise and extract holy Observations, and spiritual Considerations, from all ordinary Occurrences and Occasions ; and as the Bee sucks Honey out of every Flower, let's endeavour to distil heavenly  
and



and savory, sweet and useful *Meditations*, out of all God's Dealings with us and *Dispensations* towards us; out of all *Accidents* that befall us, or any about us; out of the *Things* we see, hear, or hear of, and out of all the *Objects* that any way come into our Thoughts. This was the *Practice* of our blessed Saviour; when he came to a *Well*, he took occasion to discourse of the *Water of Life*, *John 4*. And this has likewise been the *Usage* of the most eminent practical Christians. The Reverend and holy Mr. *Jeremy Whitaker*, as he was riding with one of his intimate Friends by *Tyburn*, ( which he had not seen, or not observ'd before ) he asked what that was, and being answered that it was *Tyburn*, where so many Malefactors had lost their Lives, he stop'd his Horse, and uttered these Words with much Affection; *O what a shame is it, that so many thousands should die for the Satisfaction of their Lusts, and so few be found willing to lay down their Lives for Christ: Why should not we, in a good Cause, and upon a good Call, be ready to be hanged for Jesus Christ? It would be an everlasting Honour, and it is a thousand times better to die for Christ, to be hanged, or to be burn'd for Christ, than to die in our Beds.*

When we are riding, walking, sitting alone in the day time; or when we are awake in the night season; let us commune with our own Hearts, and fill up such spaces of Time, and employ such *Spare-Hours* in holy Thoughts of the best Things: yea, let us set some Time *apart* for the solemn Duty of *Meditation*.

That which comes into our Souls by *Meditations*.

tion, is like a Shower of Snow, which falls soft, and sinks deep. 'Tis a good Saying of St. Austin, *Intellectus cogitabundus principium omnis boni*; A thinking Mind is a Principle productive of all good. The Father of a *Prodigal* lying on his Sick and Death-bed, straitly charg'd his only Son, that he would spend a Quarter of an hour every day in *serious solitary Thoughts*; leaving to himself the particular Subject of his retired Meditation: The Son accordingly following this Advice, at last cast into his Thoughts what might be his Father's *Intention* in such Injunction: He concluded, that his Father, being a *wise* and a *good* Man, designed to direct and lead his Thoughts to the consideration of somewhat of *Religion*: which did so mightily operate upon him, that he quickly became *rationally religious*.

Upon all Occasions, particularly and especially often meditate, and frequently think of the four last Things, *Death, Judgment, Heaven, and Hell*; the serious Thoughts of which will have a mighty *Influence* upon the *whole Course* of our Lives and Actions.

*The first of the four last Things proposed as the subject Matter of Meditation in order to the right Redemption of Time,*

I. Use in thy *Life time* to think much of the *Day of thy own particular Death*, and of the *general Dissolution of all Things*.

1. To think much of the *Day of thy own particular Death*.

Be not thou of *Lewis the eleventh's* Mind, who

who strictly charged all about him, that they should not so much as *name* the terrible Word *Death* : Do not only patiently *hear* of it, but chuse to *think*, and often to think of it.

Men are too commonly *regardleß* of their *End*, and unmindful of their own *Mortality* and frailty. The very *Heathen* have acknowledged Man's natural *Proneness* to *forget* his *End* ; and therefore they used several *Arts* to *mind* themselves and others of it. Some *Emperours*, on the Day of their *Coronation*, have had several sorts of *Marble* presented to them, out of which to chuse their *Tombs*. *Philosophers* have had their *Sepulchres* before their *Gates*, that they might neither go out nor in, but they might still be put in mind of their *Mortality* : And many great *Men* have had them in their *Places* of *Pleasure* : And dead *Men's Skulls* have been served up in delicious *Banquets* : And *Philip* King of *Macedon* had a young *Monitor*, that came every Day, and rubb'd up his Memory with a Μένειναι ἀνθρώπων ὄντων, Remember thou art but a mortal Man. And we plainly find in *Scripture*, that this is *naturally* Man's *Temper* : The *Fool* in the Gospel is a clear Instance of this ; who said to his *Soul*, *Soul*, thou hast much *Goods* laid up for many *Years*, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry, *Luke* 12. 19. He never dream'd of a *Sculte*, *hac nocte*, Thou Fool, this Night,---- That was the farthest Thing of his *Thoughts*. *St. James* reproves those who promise themselves to *morrow*, and build upon the *next Year*, for the driving of their *Trade*, and getting of *Gain*, *Jam.* 4. 3. 14.

Men in their *Health*, think not of *Sickness*; and in *Sickness*, seldome reckon of *Death*. Even *dying Men* often times think of nothing but *recovering*, and living longer in the *World*. Men are apt to look upon *Death* as *afar off*; and when in all probability they have but a *few Sands* in their *Glass* to run, they are ready to say, that they shall *multiply their Daies as the Sand*, Job 29 18.

Men can willingly *measure* their *Lands* and *Grounds*, and *number* their *Herd*s and *Drove*s of *Cattle*, and *count* the *Revenues* of their *Mannors* and *Farms*, and *reckon* their daily or yearly *Incomes*: but who is willing to *measure* and *number* his *Daies*?

Yea, we can willingly *measure* other Men's *Days*, and learn to know their *End*, and take great Notice how frail they are: We can *point* at an *old Man*, and cry he is thus or thus old; his *Daies* cannot be many; he is past his best; he has one Foot in the *Grave*. Upon sight of one *sick*, or in a *Consumption*, we are apt to say, such a one is *near* his *End*, he can't live long sure: But we take little notice of our selves; we make *little Reckoning* of our own *End*; we little consider what may become of us to morrow.

We do not *actually* think we shall *not die*; yet the most of us do not *actually* think we shall *die*. God frequently reads *Lectures* of *Mortality* to us, and yet we will not learn to *remember* them. The *Arrows* of the Almighty have flown thick on every side of us, and yet we live as if we thought to *escape alwaies*.

Though

Though others have *fallen* round about us, we are ready to count our *standing* sure. We securely lie in a *dead* Sleep amidst many *awakening* Providences. I am afraid many of us are too like your common *Grave-makers*, who often handle *Skulls* and dead *Mens Bones*, but are so daily *us'd* to them, that they are not at all moved or *affected* with them. What senseless filly Creatures are we, that we won't *believe* we are mortal, till we *feel* it; that we won't be *perswaded* we shall die, till we our selves are *struck* with Death? Ah Friends, we do not *live* as if we *believed* it, and were truly and really convinc'd, fully and throughly perswaded of it.

We are apt to *overmeasure* our Daies, to put more in than we should, to *promise* our selves what *God* never *promis'd* us, and to count those Days *ours* which are wholly in *God's Hand*, and quite out of ours.

We are ready to measure by *false Rules*: to reckon, that because we are *young*, we shall not die till we are *old*: That because we are *strong*, we shall last it out, and endure *long*: That because we are *temperate*, we need not fear Diseases and Death: That because *some* live much longer than others, that we may live as long as the longest.

The *Guilt* of Sin makes many *afraid* to take a true *Measure* of their Days. The want of a good and *well-grounded Hope* of a better Life, makes men *unwilling* to know the End of this. And the inordinate *Love* of the *World*, makes Men *loth* to know their End, and to think of *leaving* what they *love*. *Hæc faciunt*

*invisita*

*invitos mori* ; These are the Things that make us unwilling to dy ; was a discreet Answer given by the Emperour *Charles the fifth* to a certain *Duke of Venice*.

You are *naturally backward* and disinclin'd to the consideration of your latter End ; And therefore *pray* to God to enable you to it, and help you in it. Say with *David*, *Psal. 39. 4.* Lord, *make me to know my End, and the Measure of my Days, what it is : that I may know how frail I am.* And with *Moses* likewise ; *Psal. 90. 12.* So teach me to number my Daies, that I may apply my Heart to *Wisdom*. We need but a little *Arithmetick* to number our Days (as one says well) but we need a great deal of *Grace* to number them. A *Child* may be wise enough to number the *Daies* of an *old Man* ; and yet that *old Man* a *Child* in numbring his own *Days*, so as to apply his Heart to *Wisdom*. Well then, heartily beg of God, that he would make you to know your End ; to know it so, as to have your Heart touched and affected with the Knowledge of it : To know your End, and to live suitably and answerably to the Knowledge of it : To know your End, so as to make a good End of it.

Now give me leave to direct and assist you in this necessary Duty : Suffer me to serve in a *Death's-Head*, and to put a *Turf* of fresh Earth into your *Hands* ; 'tis counted very *wholesome* to smell of.

Remember and consider,

(1.) That Death, thy Death, is certain. ]

(2.) That

(2.) That the Time of thy Death is very uncertain.

(3.) That when Death comes, a great change will be made by it.

(4.) And lastly ; Consider seriously, what a sad and uncomfortable Thing it will be, to be found unprepared to die, at the point of Death : And how sweet and happy a Thing it will be, to be in a readiness and preparation at the Hour of Death. Consider,

(1.) It is *sure and certain, thou must dye at last.*

*Death entered into the World by Sin : The Wages of thy Sin, is thy Death. It is now appointed unto Men, to all Men, once to dye. Death is the way of all the Earth. Every Thing plainly points thee to it. Thy very Sleep is an Image of thy Death. The very Meat thou eatest, as it breeds thy Nourishment, so it breeds thy Diseases. Thou hast apparently died already in thy Friends and Relations, Neighbours and Acquaintance : Thou hast lost thy Parents, or Husband, or Wife, or Children, or Servants ; and therefore thou hast reason to think thou shalt one Day lose thy own Life, and certainly dye in thy own Person. Some one, it may be, that lately lay in thy Bed, and lay in thy Bosom, is now laid out of thy Sight, laid in the Grave : and Time will come, when, as lively and brisk as thou art, thou shalt lye by them, and be gathered to them. Surely every Sickness, every Disease, every Tooth-ach, Head-ach, every Pain, and Distemper, and bodily Weakness, is an Harbinger and Forerunner of thy Death,*  
and

and a plain Remembrancer to thee of thy latter End. Thou see'st enough in *others*, thou finde'st enough in *thy self*, to make thee to know thy *own Frame*, and to cause thee to remember that thou thy self art but Dust.

*Xerxes* viewing his vast Army, wept over them, to think that within a few *Lustres* of Years there would be none of them all remaining. Be affected to think, how a few Years will wear out, and carry off thy self, and all thy Family, the numerous Company of thy Friends and Relations. Neighbours and Acquaintance.

The close Meditation of the Certainty of thy own Dissolution, this will keep thee from living here as if thou wert to live here always: which is a common Fault among Men, reprov'd and censur'd of old by *Seneca*: And from building here, as if thou shouldst here continue for ever, as *Diogenes* once severely charg'd the *Megarenses*. When thou rearest thy Building, this Course will cause thee to think of thy own Tomb and Grave, and that thy *earthly House of this Tabernacle must be dissolved*. And this will enable thee to live loose from the temporary Enjoyments of this present World, and to have lower Thoughts of all earthly Pleasures, which are but for a Season; and would engage you to be learning to die, as long as you live.

The frequent Thoughts of thy latter End would prompt thee to say thus to thy self; How shall I dare to live in Jest, who am sure I must die in earnest? Am I afraid to die, and yet shall I use all means I can to make Death dangerous and terrible to me? Shall I venture to live in  
that



*that State of Life, in which I would not dye?*

(2.) Consider farther; That the *Day and Means of thy Death is as uncertain, as thy Death it self is certain.*

Think when thou art *eating*, that then thou maiest be *digging* thy Grave with thy Teeth: and when thou art *drinking*, that thou maiest find and meet with *Death* in the Cup or Pot. When thou art ready to take thy *Rest*, consider, that God *this Night* may require thy Soul of thee, and before Morning may take away the airy Difference between Sleep and Death. Here practice according to Seneca's Direction; Say to thy self when thou goest to sleep, it may be I shall never awake again: and when thou risest, it may be I shall never sleep again. Say to thy self when thou goest out, it may be I shall never return home and come in alive again: And when thou comest in at any Time, say to thy self, It may be I shall never go out of doors again. Consider, when thou art going a Journey, that thou maist be going to thy long home: When thou art riding upon the Road, that thou maiest be posting unto thy Grave; that the Horse thou ridest on may be the pale Horse, and his Name that sits upon him, though unseen, may be Death. Conclude with thy self, I must dye shortly, I may dye instantly: This Day may be the last that I shall see; this Hour the last that I shall spend; this Word the last that I shall speak; this Deed the last that I shall perform; this Place the last that I shall breathe in. When thou goest into any Company, consider, that it may be the last time that ever thou shalt come into the Company of those Persons; that

that therefore it behoves thee to behave thy self amongst them, and to spend thy Time, and bestow thy Hours with them, like a *Man*, and a *Christian*; not like a *Beast*, or an *Heathen*: to demean thy self there soberly and temperately, and with good Government of thy Appetite and Passions, and with the Exercise and Improvement of thy Reason and of Grace, in some useful Discourse and profitable Converse; not childishly and unmanly, intemperately and luxuriously, rudely and uncivilly, wildly, and extravagantly.

The often renewed *Meditation* of the great *Uncertainty* of the Time of thy Departure. This will be a means to hasten thy *Repentance*, which, if deferr'd, may prove too late: And will surely help thee so to carry thy self continually, as one that reckons and uses a *single Day*, as if it were a *whole Life*: To live every day, as if it were thy *very last*: Not to promise thy self a *Morrow*, and to neglect thy *present Work* in Hope and *Expectation* of it; but to order thy self immediately, as if thou didst never look to see and enjoy it: and to count it as *pure Grain* as may be, if God shall be pleased to afford thee the Light and Benefit of a *new Day*.

As the *Bird* guideth her Flight with her *Train*, and the *Ship* is governed at the *Stern*, or hindermost part; so the *Life* of Man is directed and ordered by frequent *Meditation* of his *last* *ter End*.

(3.) Think moreover of the great *Change* that will at last be made by *Death*: which is  

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lively represented in a Story, related by a learned Doctor, of a fair young German Gentleman, who, while he lived, often refused to be pictured, but put off the importunity of his Friends Desire, by giving way that after a few Days Burial they might send a Painter to his Vault, and if they saw cause for it, draw the Image of his Death unto the Life. They did so, and found his Face half eaten, and his Midriff and Back-bone full of Serpents, and so he stands pictured among his armed Ancestours. Think how the Case will shortly be much alike with thee; that Death in a Moment will turn thy Colour into Paleness, thy Heart into Coldness, thy Beauty into Lofsomness; and will so alter and disfigure thee, that thy very Hasband, or Wife, or Child, will stand afraid, and start at thee: That thy nearest, dearest, kindest Friends, who delighted in thy Company whilst thou livedst, took thee to their Board, took thee to their Bed, and put thee in their Bosom; will, as soon as thou art dead, take a speedy Course to remove thee out of their Sight, yea, to put thee under Ground, because by Death thou wilt become not only useles, but offensive to them: And what a frightful Spectacle thou wouldst be, if thy Body should be viewed, when once the Vermine have bred in it, and shall have devoured and consumed some Parts of it.

Think, how Death will make a Change in thy Body, a change in thy Mansion, Habitation, Companions: That when thou art dead, thou shalt quickly change thy Bed for a winding Sheet, thy Chamber for a Coffin, thy House for a Grave, thy Friends for Worms.

This

This Consideration will be hugely instrumental to *beat down Pride* of any Beauty, Health, Strength, or Ornaments of the Body ; and be useful to cause thee to walk *humbly*, and *soberly*; and will instruct thee to *say to thy self*, Why should I glory in any such *transitory* Enjoyment ? As fair and fine as I may be apt to think my self, I know I shall be but a *sorry Creature* when *Death* comes. Why should I delight to stand long at the *Glass*, and there to view my own Face, and *Features*, and *Dresses* now, since *Death* will one Day *so change* me, that my most intimate loving familiar *Friends* will *hardly endure* to behold me ? Why should I *pride* my self in any *rich Attire* and brave Apparel, who must ere long be stripp'd to a *winding Sheet* ? Why should I bestow so much *cost* upon that *Tenement*, which I shall dwell *but a while* in, and which will *decay* and fall to *utter Ruin*, when I have done *all I can* ? Why should I make *my Belly my God*, which must be *destroyed*, and be *Meat for Worms* ? Why should I be so *high* and *stately*, as to think no House good enough, no Room fine enough, no Fare dainty enough for me, who must quickly be brought as *low* as the *Grave*, and be forc'd to make my *Bed* in the *dark*, and to lay my *Head* in the *Dust*; to lodge, yea dwell in a black lonely *desolate Hole* of Earth ; to say to the *Grave*, Thou art mine House ; to say to *Corruption*, Thou art my Father ; and to the *Worm*, Thou art my Mother, and my *Sister* ? Why should I spend all my Time in pleasing and *pampering* this *base Flesh*, and in *over caring* for this changeable *vile Body*,

which must shortly suffer Rottenness and Corruption? Shall I not rather take care to beautify and *adorn my inner Man*; to get a *Change* wrought in my *Soul* by the good Spirit and Grace of God before I suffer a *Change* in my *Body*, a *Change* by *Sickness*, a *Change* by *Death*? and so to live, that when I am dead, it may not be said of me, *Here lies one that was dead while he lived, and whose Soul then stank worse by sinful Corruption, than his Body now stinks of Putrefaction?*

(4.) Consider once more; What a sad and uncomfortable Thing it will be, to be found unprepared to die, at the point of Death: and how happy a Thing it will be, to be in a readiness and preparation, at the Hour of Death.

[1.] Think well with thy self, how *miserable a Thing it will be, to be wholly unprepared for Death, when you come to die indeed: to be driven away in thy Wickedness* (as the *Wise Man* speaks) *Prov. 14. 32.* And forced to go to thy own Place whether thou wilt or no.

To say as *Theophrastus* of old, *Dii boni nunc?* Good God, must I go now? How *discompos'd* and disorder'd, amaz'd and terrified wilt thou be, when thou art *surpris'd*? What a disconsolate Condition was that of *Cesar Borgia*? who, when through the Errour of a Servant, he had unawares drunk of the poison'd Wine, which he and his Father Pope *Alexander the sixth* had mingled and prepared for some rich Cardinals, and verily expected it would prove his Death, is said to have broke out into this or the like Expression; I had made Provision against all possible Disasters, but only Death, for I did not think I should have died so soon.

How

How troublesome will it be to thee, when thy Soul is about to be divorced from thy Body, to be at best *uncertain* then what will become of thee? To express thy self with dying *Aristotle*, *Idie doubtful, not well knowing whither I am going.* Or with the Emperour *Adrian*; *Oh dear departing wandring Soul, the old and sweet Companion of my Body, into what Region art thou now thou wilt never be so merry and going surely? pleasant as thou hast been.*

How intolerable vexatious will it be, to change for *Uncertainties*; or to make a certain Change for the worse? To die *unsatisfied* what will become of thee, as to thy future *unchangeable State*; Or, sure and certain that thou shalt enter into a worse State and Place, and shalt be miserable to all Eternity? To see then but a Step, but a *Breath* between thee and everlasting Death: To have all the horrid and heinous Sins of a whole mislled and mispent Life fiercely fly in thy very Face, and thy enraged furious guilty Conscience to be then *most active* to torment thee, the nearer thou apprehendest thy self approaching to the End of thy mortal Life: As usually bodily Aches and Wounds, do prick and pain and shoot most, the nearer it draweth unto Night.

What a lamentable sad Case was that of *Cardinal Wolsey*, to cry out in his extream unhappy Circumstances, *Had I been as careful and diligent to please and serve the God of Heaven, as I have been to comply with the Will of my earthly King, he would not have left and forsaken me now in my gray Hairs and old Age, as the ether has done?*

So think what a *doleful Case* it will be, *for thee* in thy *last Hours* to pour forth thy Soul in *such Words* as these ; If I had served my God as earnestly and unweariedly, as I have constantly served the *World*, served *diverse Lusts and Pleasures*, served the *Devil* himself ; Had I been at *Church*, when I was in *Bed* ; been in my *Closet* upon my *Knees*, when I was *sitting* rippling upon the *Ale-bench*, or was quaffing at *Tavern*, and drinking of *Healths* upon my *Knees* ; Had I satisfied the *Reason* of a *Man*, as I gratified my *brutish Appetite* and sensual Desire ; Had I done the *Will* of God and of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, as I have the *Will* of the *Devil*, the *Will* of the *Flesh*, and fulfilled my own carnal corrupt *Will* ; I had then been *own'd* by God, and  *approv'd* by my own *Conscience*, inwardly strengthened and supported, and sweetly comforted and refresh'd ; who now am deserted and *rejected* by God, and miserably perplexed and disquieted, rent and racked, torn and *tormented* in my own *Conscience*. Then thou wilt certainly count and call *thy self* *unhappy*, and *him* the *only happy Man*, who (as dying *Theophilus* said of devout *Arsenius*) has had the Hour of his Departure ever before his Eyes.

That is the *first* ; Consider what a *dreadful Thing* it is, to be found *unprovided at the Hour of Death*. When Friends and Physicians cannot keep thee, and God and his good Angels will not take thee, O then, O then *what will become of thee !*

[2.] Seriously think on the other hand, what an *happy and comfortable Thing* it will be, to  
find

find your Time well improved, and your self prepared to die before you die.

'Tis a true Saying of the *Wise Man*, that to a good Man the *Day of Death* is better than the *Day of his Birth*, Eccl. 7. 1. For, is not *that Day* which perfectly frees, and fully delivers a good Man from the many Vanities, and great Vexations, which the Life of Man is obnoxious to, and the Troubles and Sufferings which the Life of a Christian is exposed to, *far better than that Day* which lets him into the Possession of them? Again, *The Time* when a Person has attain'd the End of his being, made good the Hopes of others, answer'd God's and Man's expectation concerning him, walked himself in the fear of the Lord, brought up Children in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord, walked worthy of his Vocation, fill'd up every Relation with suitable Duties and Graces, serv'd his Generation according to the Will of God, liv'd and acted with reference to Eternity; *The Time* when he most willingly leaves this wicked World, and leaves an holy Seed to stand up in his Room and Stead; leaves a good Name, and a good Example behind him, and goes to Heaven, to the Spirits of just Men made perfect; goes to God his heavenly Father, and to Christ his Redeemer, to receive the gracious and glorious Reward of all his Works and Labours, and the Crown he has striven and contended for; Surely *the Day when this falls out*, which is the *Day of his Death*, gives cause of more abundant Comfort, than can the *Day of his Birth*, together with all the *Daies* of



his *Life*. Is not *that Day* better, wherein a Man has truly and really answered the *Ends of Life*, than that in which he only began at first to live? Is not *that Day* better, in which he has fully and compleatly acted his part well, quitted and behav'd himself like a Man and Christian, and is gone off the *Stage* of this lower World with *Credit* and *Esteem*, *Approbation* and *Applause* of God himself, good Angels, and Men; than the *Day* of his first appearing upon the *Stage* or *Theater* of this World, in a way of *Probation* and *Trial*, and in *Hope* of his future good *Performance*? Is not the *Day* of his actual *Admission* and honourable *Reception* into a *blissful Condition* and happy *Mansion*, far better than the *Day* of his *Entrance* into a *State of Preparation* for it?

Think well with thy self, what a joytul *Day*, what a lightsome *Hour*, what a *Time* of refreshing it will be to thee, to be able to say with thy Saviour, a little before thy *Departure*, *Father, I have glorified thee on Earth, I have finished the Work which thou hast given me to do: Joh. 17. 4.* And with the Apostle St. Paul, *2 Tim. 4. 6, 7.* The *Time* of my *Departure* is at hand. I have fought a good *Fight*, I have finished my *Course*, I have kept the *Faith*. My rejoicing is this, the *Testimony* of my *Conscience*, that in *Simplicity* and *Godly Sincerity*, I have had my *Conversation* in the *World: 2 Cor. 1. 12* To say with *Hilarion*, (as St. *Jerom* reports in his *Life*) Go out my *Soul*, why art thou afraid? go out, why lingrest thou? thou hast served *Christ* well nigh these seventy *Years*, and dost thou now fear *Death*?

To see, that it has been to thee to live *Christ*,  
and

and to be able to look on thy *Death* as thy *Gain*:  
*Phil. 1. 21.* And with good old Dr. Gouge, in  
thy last Sickness to term *Death*, *thy best Friend*  
*next to Jesus Christ*: With St. Paul, to *desire to*  
*depart*; *Philip. 1. 23.* and to be ready to utter  
such Language as this,

*Oh loose this Frame, this Knot of Man unty!*

*That my free Soul may use her Wing,*

*Which is now pinion'd with Mortality,*

*As an entangled hamper'd Thing.*

As the pious Mr. Herbert pathetically ex-  
presses it in one of his sacred *Poems*.

Dwell upon these Considerations, That the  
Loss and *Misimprovement of Time* will make a  
*Death bed uneasy* to you, and that the right re-  
deeming of time will render a *death-bed comfortable*  
to you; And his will be very apt to move you to  
*prepare for Death*, by dying to Sin, dying to the  
World, and living to Righteousness, before you  
die: 'Twill help you to live every Day so in-  
deed, as others wish that they had liv'd, when  
they come to lie upon a *Death-bed*: To live so  
now, that you may with comfort think of dying;  
and may be freed from the slavish Fear of  
Death, and be held no longer in *bondage*  
by it? *Heb. 2. 15.* 'Twill cause you to live  
the *life of the Righteous*, that so you may die the  
*Death of the Righteous*; die safely, and die comfort-  
ably: 'Twill make you careful to set, not only  
your *House*, but your *Heart* in order, your *Life*  
in order; and so to dispatch your Work and Busi-  
ness, that when you come to die, you may have  
nothing to do but to die, and freely and cheerful-

ly to resign your *Spirit* to the *Father of Spirits*, and to surrender your *Soul* to your faithful Creator, and gracious loving Lord Redeemer. In a Word, it will enable you so to live, that you may have *Hope in your own Death*; *Prov.* 14. 32. and that when Friends shall mourn for your Departure, they may not sorrow *without Hope*, *1 Thes.* 4. 13.

And so much shall suffice for your Direction as to your *Meditation of Death*, your own particular Death, in order to your Redemption of Time.

2. Meditate here moreover of the *general Dissolution of all Things*, at least in this *inferiour World*.

Think well of what *St. Peter* informs you, that *all these Things shall be dissolved*, *2 Pet.* 3. 11. Consider, that the Description which is there given of this Dissolution, is too august and big by far for so small a Work as the Destruction of the City of *Jerusalem*: That the *Scoffers* arguing there against the Promise of *Christ's Coming* (that *all Things continue as they were from the Beginning of the Creation*) *verse 4.* does clearly shew, that *this Coming of Christ* was not understood by *them* (and consequently not by *St. Peter*) of the *Burning of a City by War*; a Thing, which might as *probably* and easily happen to *Jerusalem*, as it had already fallen out in many other Places of the World: But of the *final glorious Coming of Christ to judge the World*; which Judgment the *Conflagration* of the Earth is to attend.

Think

Think very seriously with thy self that the *Heavens and the Earth* which are now, are reserved unto Fire: ver. 7. How the *Heavens* shall one Day pass away with a great Noise, ver. 10. and being on Fire shall be dissolved, ver. 12. and the *Elements*, or *Hosts*, shall melt with fervent Heat; the *Earth* also and the *Works* of Nature, or Art, that are therein shall be burnt up, ver. 10, 12. That though the superiour, *Aethereal*, starry *Heavens* may be exempted, (as some with probable Reason conceive) yet, that without dispute or doubt, the *Globe of the Earth*, and the circumjacent *Air*, with all the *Garnishings* of them, shall be burnt up: That this *Air* and *Earth* shall be strangely and wonderfully alter'd, though not annihilated: That the present *Order*, and comely *Beauty* of the *Compages* and *Frame* of this visible *lower World* shall be dissolv'd: That this great *House*, and goodly *Building*, made for *Man* to dwell in, shall be taken down, and all the *Furniture* wherewith it was fitted for his *Use* and *Service* shall be destroyed.

That it will be an Act of *Wisdom* for God to, abolish these Things, when the *Time* appointed for Probation and Trial of immortal Spirits cloathed with *Flesh* is ended and expired; and *Men* shall enter into so different a *State*, in which, there will be no need of any Thing that serves and ministers to this *terrene* and *animal Life*.

And though God think good to continue this *World* for a while, that it may be a *Theater* whereon his *Wisdom*, *Goodness*, *Mercy*, *Patience*, and other his glorious *Attributes* may be displayed, and made conspicuous; yet it is

convenient and reasonable, that this Stage of God's Acts and Works of Providence, when all is finished, should be taken down.

And think yet farther; That it will be an Act of Justice for God to do this: That though he respite the Dissolution of the World, deserv'd by Sin, yet he does not revoke the Sentence; but in due Time will execute Judgment and Vengeance upon it, for the first Sin that Man committed, and for all the rest that have been acted in it: That Man, not only being a Tenant at will, but having unworthily broken his Covenant, and forfeited his Possession by breaking the Articles of his Lease; his Lord at last will turn him out of Doors, or rather pull down his House about his Ears, and not suffer it to be alwaies a Nest of Rebels and Covenant-breakers.

That this World, the Creature, made for the Use of Man, being defiled and abused by him to serve him in his Sin; when the Sins of the Inhabitants of the Earth (as of the Amorites of old) shall arrive to a Fulness, Gen. 15. 16. when once the rebellious Generations of Adam shall have fill'd up the Measure of their Iniquities, and are ripe for Judgment; the Day of Dissolution will then certainly come, called expressly the Day of Judgment and Perdition of ungodly Men: That then the wicked, and abominable Men, should be burnt in the Place of their Wickedness, and the Objects and Instruments of their Sin shall be destroyed with them, and become the Instruments of their Punishment: For so, the Garden of Eden, wherein Man was at first plac'd, was destroyed and defac'd, when once

he had sinned in it. And what more usual? even among Men, than to order the Execution of notorious Malefactors, in the Places where they have committed their Wickedness; and to sentence the Houses wherein themselves and their Families liv'd to be demolished? Their Houses shall be made a Dunghil, Dan. 3. 29.

You have heard of great and terrible Fires in the World, and of famous Cities consum'd thereby; and have seen not many Years since the devouring desolating Flames of London, the Metropolis and chief City of our Nation: But think with thy self, that all this is nothing at all to that great Fire, which one Day God will kindle, at once setting Heaven and Earth in a Flame together.

Let me here assist your Meditation, by proposing and presenting to you a notable Description given by the learned Doctor More of the general and final Conflagration of the Earth. Christ will cause, saies he, such an universal Thunder and Lightning, that it shall rattle over all the Quarters of the Earth, rain down burning Comets and falling Stars, and discharge such Claps of unextinguishable Fire, that it will do sure Execution wherever it falls; so that the Ground being excessively heated, those subterraneous Mines of combustible Matter will also take Fire: which inflaming the inward Exhalations of the Earth will cause a terrible Murmur under Ground, so that the Earth will seem to thunder against the tearing and ratling of the Heavens, and all will be fill'd with sad remugient Echo's: Earth-quakes and Eruptions of Fire there will be every where, and whole

whole Cities and Countries swallowed down by the vast gapings and wide Divulsions of the Ground. -- And this fiery Vengeance shall be so thirsty that it shall drink deep of the very Sea; nor shall the Water quench her devouring Appetite, but excite it. -- Wherefore the great Channel of the Sea shall be left dry, and all Rivers shall be turned into Smoak and Vapour; so that the whole Earth shall be inveloped in one entire Cloud of an unspeakable Thicknes, which shall cause more than an Egyptian Darknes, clammy and palpable to be felt, which added to this choaking Heat and Stench will compleat this External Hell.

Consider, how the Scripture testifies that God will do this; and the Power of God assures us that he can do it; for nothing is hard or difficult to him, much less impossible. Think of the Creation, God's raising and building this Frame of the World out of nothing; and reason thus with thy self; Cannot he that made it by the Word of his Power, easily dissolve it? And argue further in this manner; Cannot he that destroyed the old World by a Floud of Waters, destroy this by Fire, and cause this to die of a Feaver, as that did of a Dropsy? Cannot he that turned Sodom and Gomorrah into Ashes, do the like with the World it self also? Is not he that made Mount Sinai shake and smoke, at the giving of the Law, able to dissolve all these Things?

The close and intent Meditation of this general Dissolution, will clearly convince thee, that Sin is an evil and a bitter Thing; and will move thee to hate and abhor, to shun and avoid Sin, which

which is of a Nature so *mischievous* and destructive, which is the *meritorious* procuring Cause of so dreadful a Judgment; which not only of old brought the Floud of Water upon the World of the Ungodly, and forced down *Gebennam de Cælo*, (as *Salvian* speaks) caused God to rain Hell-fire and Brimstone from Heaven upon *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*, and miserably destroyed *Jerusalem*, and the Temple, and turned their fruitful Land into a barren Wilderness; but will one Day set this World on fire, and put it in a flame, and turn this stately Structure and beautiful Frame into a rude confused Chaos.

The deep and earnest Thoughts of this will affect and influence thy Heart and Life, and quicken thee exceedingly to all Sincerity, Diligence, and Zeal in the Exercise of Godliness; to an holy Fear and Aw of him who can and will destroy the World: 'Twill constrain thee to use the Words of the Apostle, 2 Pet. 3. 11. and to say in good Sadness, *Seeing then that all these Things shall be dissolved, what manner of Person ought I to be in all holy Conversation and Godliness?* Seeing this Destruction shall thus involve all, what an engagement does this lay upon me to live the most pure strict Life that ever Man liv'd? It will incite thee, by a constant course of true Piety wisely to provide for thy Escape in that Day, to save and secure thy self from the Evil and Danger of it, that thou maiest not be undone by this general Dissolution, nor suffer Loss in this Conflagration, nor perish in this Burning? 'Twill put thee in mind to fit thy self for this Day of Dissolution of all Things,



by getting the *Works of the Devil* thoroughly dissolved in thee, and the Kingdom of God set up and established in thy Soul.

The due Consideration of this general Dissolution, and final Conflagration, will certainly keep thee from setting thy Heart *inordinately* upon any outward *earthly Thing*, from heaping up Treasure to thy self here, from dreaming that any of thy *Houses* here shall continue for ever, from having unlimited *everlasting Affections* for flitting, fugitive, *transitory Things*; for the World, the *Fashion* of which *passeth away*; 1 Cor. 7. 31. or, for the Things of the World, which either *perish* with the present *using*, Colos. 2. 22. or must at last be burnt up in the general Conflagration. It will preserve thee from placing thy *Heaven* and *Happiness* in any Thing here *below*; from being transported, and *infinitely pleased* with thy convenient Situation, thy well-built House, thy pleasant Gardens, fruitful Grounds, rich Furniture, gorgeous Apparel, store of Provisions, and all manner of Accommodations as to earthly Possessions, and outward Enjoyments; since *all those Things*, which sensual and voluptuous Persons now take *excessive Delight* in, shall be *demolished* at the great Day; and they themselves shall then like *Bees* be *smother'd* in their own *Hives*.

*This Meditation* will enforce thee to make this *Inference* and *Conclusion*; Shall all *this Frame* be certainly dissolved? then surely *this is not the Place* of my *Rest*: I will be *wiser* hereafter than to take *this World* for my *Dwelling House*; I will only look upon't as my *Cot-*

*tage, my Tent and Tabernacle, wherein as a Pilgrim I am to sojourn for a Time: Nor will I reckon the Things of this World my Goods, but only my Lumber, which I can easily bear the Loss of: I will presently put my self in a readinesse to leave and forsake this Place which is so near to Ruin, and shortly will surely be burnt up. I have no continuing City here; I will therefore seek one to come, look after an heavenly Countrey, let my Affections on Things above, make sure of an enduring Substance, of something much more certain and lasting than any of the Enjoyments of this World: I will labour by charitable laying out, to lay up a Treasure in Heaven, quite out of the reach of this terrible Burning; To store up such durable Riches, as neither Moth nor Rust can now corrupt, nor Thieves break through and steal, nor this flaming raging Fire be ever able to devour: I will make it my constant Care to provide; and that as when the little House of my earthly Tabernacle shall be dissolv'd, so when this great House of the World, and its fair Furniture shall be destroyed, I may have another, a better House to receive me, an House not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens, 2 Cor. 5. 1.*

*I find St. Cryostome discoursing much to this Sense and Purpose; If some body should give notice to thee, that this City in which thou livest would all fall down within a Year, or should very quickly be destroyed; and that it and all Things in it should utterly be consum'd with Fire, and nothing at all be left unburnt; and that of necessity thou must depart hence, and*

go into another City, in which thou shouldst spend thy whole Life ; and in which thou shouldst have nothing at all to sustain and relieve thee, but such Goods only as thou shouldst send from hence thither ; If thou shouldst undoubtedly believe this, no reason certainly could ever induce thee to hord up Treasures in this City, to begin to build a great House here, to plant a Vineyard, to set Gardens and Groves : but thou wouldst bend and turn all thy Thoughts, and use and apply all thy Endeavours, to transmit all into that City, into which thou knewest thou shouldst thy self be forc'd to remove.

*The second of the four last Things proposed as the Subject Matter of Meditation in order to the right redemption of Time.*

II. Proceed to meditate of a future and final Judgment,

Think, { 1. That such a Thing will certainly be.  
2. That the Time of it is to us as uncertain as can be.

1. Consider seriously of the *Certainty* and *Necessity* of a Judgment to come in another Life. Think how the common *universal Consent* of all Ages of the World avouches and declares it: That the very *Heathens* had *natural express Notions* of a final Judgment, and a future Reward or Punishment, which made some among them prefer the Exercise of Vertue and Good-

ness

ness before the Enjoyment of this mortal Life, and the outward Comforts of it : and *abhor* the Practice of any Dishonesty more than Death.

And do but give *Audience* to your own *Conscience*, and you will find *internal Experiments*, sufficient to convince you of a Judgment to be looked for after this Life ; to cause you to conclude, that the private *Session* kept in the *Conscience* of a Sinner here, is but the *Antecedent* and Fore-runner of a publick and general *Affize* : That *Conscience* (which is God's *Deputy*, and keepeth *Court* for him here ) does but *begin* now, what God hereafter at the great *Audit* will himself compleat and *finish*. Look upon the *secret Checks* and Rebukes of thy own *Conscience*, upon thy Commission of any base or unworthy Action ; and upon the *inward Applauses* and Gratulations, the *hidden Joys* and Exultations of thy *Conscience*, upon the Performance of any laudable vertuous Action, to be so many *Tasts* and *Pledges*, Earnests and Assurances of a *twofold Sentence* or Award, that shall be given at the last Day ; and some Suggestion and *Intimation* of that *Horror* and Confusion that shall seize upon the Wicked, and of that *Peace* and Comfort which the Righteous shall be filled with at the general Day of Judgment. Consider, how thy *Conscience* reflecting upon thy past Actions, does not only allow and *approve* thy good Actions, but does also create a wonderful *Boldness* and Confidence in thee ; and does not only *disapprove* thy evil Actions, but does also breed a strange *Dread*, beget a fearful

ful Expectation and Terrour in thee ; and all this *without relation* to any Thing either to be suffered or enjoyed in this Life : and therefore that *Conscience* is not only a *Judg* in this Life, but is also a *Witness*, bound over to give Testimony for or against thee, at some Judgment after this Life to pass upon thee.

Consider moreover, That the many remarkable *particular Judgments*, inflicted by God either upon *Nations*, or *Cities*, or *Persons* here in this World, do not obscurely seem to signify and *foreshew*, that a *general Judgment* shall surely come and certainly pass upon the *whole World*, and that Justice shall be infallibly executed upon all final impenitent Rebels hereafter.

And consider yet farther, that *in Reason* there must be a future final Judgment, that God at present may rule and govern the *rational World*, by giving *notices* of future *Rewards* or *Punishments*, which all must unavoidably be adjudged to : And that God may one Day *save* the *Honour* of his own *Attributes* ; that though Things seem to be carried very *unequally* here in this World, and *Judgment* be never fully *executed* here ; but the Wicked are often suffered to escape, and the Good and Upright are frequently afflicted and evil-intreated ; yet all may be *rectified* and regulated at last ; and God may *openly* and evidently appear to be just in punishing the Wicked and Ungodly, and good in owning and rewarding every truly virtuous and righteous Person : And so, may not only vindicate and *right himself*, but justify and *right his People* too, in the Eye and Face of all the World.

And

And then go on to think of *Scripture evidences* and Testimonies ; That *after Death the Judgment*: immediatly after Death, a particular Judgment. *Heb. 9. 27.* Think of that awakening, startling Summons, *Give an Account of thy Stewardship: for thou mayest be no longer Steward.* *Luke 16. 2.* *Alcibiades* in *Plutarch* coming to *Pericles* his Door, and hearing that he was busie and solicitous about making his Accounts to the *Athenians*, said, *It rather concern'd him to study how he might best put by his Accounts*, and avoid the giving of them up : But assure thy self, there is no declining of it here. Consider, that God has appointed a Day, a Day of general Judgment, in the which he will judg the World in Righteousness, by that Man whom he hath ordained : *Acts 17. 31.* And that we must, *2 Cor. 5. 10.* *Rom. 14. 10.* all appear and stand before the Judgment-seat of Christ : not only appear in Person (as those do that are cited into a Court) but be laid open and made manifest, as the Word *καταπαύσεις* signifies : have our Heart and Life ript up, and all our Thoughts, Words and Works presented to our own view, and expos'd to the view of others ; disclosed and discovered before Men and Angels. That the Books shall then be opened : *Rev. 20. 12.* the Book of God's Omniscience, and the Book of every Man's particular Conscience : That the Rolls or Records of all our Actions shall be produc'd, and we shall be judg'd out of those Things that are written in the Books. That we must all appear before the Judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the Things done in his Body,

Body, that is, the due Reward of the Works done in his Body, or in the State of Conjunction with the Body, according to, or by way of Retribution to, what he hath done, whether it be good or bad. The sober serious Consideration of a most impartial Judicature and Tribunal, will mightily awe thy Soul. Felix himself trembled, when St. Paul reasoned of a Judgment to come. Acts 24. 25. I have read a Story of a certain King of Hungary, who being on a Time marvellous sad and heavy, his Brother would needs know of him what he ailed: Oh Brother saies he, I have been a great Sinner against God, and I know not how I shall appear before him, when he comes to Judgment. His Brother told him, they were but melancholy Thoughts, and made light of them. The King replied nothing at the present, but in the dead Time of the Night sent an Executioner of Justice, and caused him to sound a Trumpet before his Brother's Door, which according to the Custom of that Countrey was a Sign of present Execution. This Royal Person hearing and seeing the Messenger of Death, sprang pale and trembling into his Brother's Presence, beseeching the King to let him know wherein he had offended. O Brother, replied the King, thou hast loved me, and never offended me; and is the sight of my Executioner so dreadful to thee? and shall not I so great a Sinner, fear to be brought to Judgment before Jesus Christ?

The frequent Meditation of a Judgment to come, will exceedingly move and affect thee, and cause thee to live and act suitably and answerably to thy belief of it: Twil keep thee from spending thy Time and talk in rashly judging others

others, lest God severely enter into Judgment with thee : *Mat. 7. 1.* 'Twill awaken thee to endeavour to do every Thing, as one that is accountable for all he does : 'Twill put thee upon examining and calling thy self to an Account : and cause thee to get all thy *Accounts* ready against the great *Audit* : 'Twill help thee to *judg. thy self* here, that thou maiest not be judged and condemned hereafter at the great and last Day : It will excite and stir thee up to *Repentance*, and provoke thee to the Performance of a course of new and sincere Obedience ; to make *that Law* the Rule of thy Life, which God will make the Rule of his Judgment.

The *Wise Man* makes this an *Argument* to induce Men to fear God, and keep his Commandments that God will bring every *Work* into Judgment, wihatever secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil, *Ecclef. 12. 13, 14.* St. Paul very earnestly press'd the *Athenians* to Repentance, by this most powerful and cogent Argument, drawn from the Certainty of a future Judgment ; *Acts 17. 30, 31.* God now commandeth all Men every where to repent : because he hath appointed a Day in the which he will judg the World in Righteousness. And this was the Reason of the *Apostles* Labour, of all his Ambition and Design to be acceptable to God, whether living or dying ; because we must all appear before the Judgment-seat of Christ : *2 Cor. 5. 9, 10.* Yea, this was the Ground of all his Industry and Painsfulness in the Ministry ; Knowing therefore the Terror of the Lord,



*Lord, we perswade Men, says he. v. 11. Considering the Dreadfulness of this Appearance of God, we strive to bring Men to embrace the Truth, and to live as those that are thus to be judged. And in Hope of a Resurrection to a Judgment of Absolution, herein did he exercise himself to have alwaies a Conscience void of Offence toward God, and toward Men, Acts 24. 15, 16. He knew, if Conscience absolv'd him in this Life, it would also under God acquit him in the other. Thy earnest looking for the glorious Appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ, is apt to engage and prevail with thee to deny Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, and to live soberly, righteously and godlily in this present World, Tit. 2. 12, 13.*

*Thy thinking of Judgment, will make thee careful of thy Thoughts, because God will judge the Secrets of Men, Rom. 2. 16. And manifest the Counsels of the Hearts, 1 Cor. 4. 5. And render thee watchful over thy Words, because of all thy hard Speeches, Jud. 15. And of every idle Word thou must give an Account; and by thy Words thou shalt be justified or condemned, Mat. 12. 36, 37. And will cause thee to be circumspect in all thy Ways, and narrowly observant of all thy Actions; because Christ will come to convince Men of all their ungodly Deeds; Jude 15. And thou must be judged according to thy Works, Rev. 20. 13.*

*Didst thou faithfully mind thy self of a future Judgment, thou wouldst not be so frothy and foolish in thy Speeches, so vain and profane in thy Merriments, so deceitful in thy Trade,*

Trade, so formal in thy Duties; thou wouldst not  
sottishly sleep : or impertinently muse, or irreve-  
rently talk out Sermons, nor mumble and huddle  
over thy Prayers like so many *Ave Marie's* :  
Thou wouldst certainly think and speak, and act;  
buy and sell, hear and pray, carry thy self in thy  
dealings with Men, and in thy Devotions to God,  
as one that must give an account of thy self to  
God. O think and say at the End and Close of  
every Day, Now I have *one Day less to live,*  
and *one Day more to reckon for.* It is reported  
of Ignatius Loyola that he used to say, when he  
heard a Clock strike, *There's one Hour more that I*  
*have to answer to God for.* Such a good Medita-  
tion concerning the *past Hour*, would surely  
quicken thee to spend the *following* and *succeed-*  
*ing Hour much better.*

To conclude this particular; Consider thou  
art to be *judged by Christ*; and surely then thou  
wilt not be *ashamed of him* now, lest he be  
*ashamed of thee* another Day : Thou wilt wise-  
ly labour for an *Interest* in him, who is to be  
thy *Judg*; that when the *Devil* shall *accuse* thee,  
thou maiest have an *Advocate* to plead  
for thee, and the *Judg* himself to *befriend*  
thee, and to deal according to the *Mildness* of  
the Gospel with thee : Thou wilt hear and  
receive his *Commands* now, that thou maiest  
hereafter hear the *Sentence* of *Absolution* from  
him : Thou wilt endeavour so to live, that  
thou maiest look upon the *Day of Judgment* as  
the *Time* of thy *Refreshment* and maiest *love the*  
*appearing* of thy Lord and Judge, 2 Tim. 4. 8.

The eminently holy Mr. John Fanewick  
sometime Fellow of King's Colledge in Cambridge,

had very early arriv'd and attained to such an high pitch and great measure of spiritual Readiness, and heavenly Preparedness, that when once there was much Talk, that one had fore-told that *Doom's-Day* should be upon such a Day; although he blamed the presumptuous Folly of the false Prophet, yet supposing it were true, *What then, said he? What if the Day of Judgment were come, as it will most certainly come shortly? If I were sure the Day of Judgment were to begin within an Hour, I should be glad with all my Heart. If at this very instant I should hear such Thundrings, and see such Lightenings, as Israel did at Mount Sinai, I am perswaded my very Heart would leap for joy. But this I am confident of, through infinite Mercy, that the very Meditation of that Day hath even ravished my Soul and the Thought of the Certainty and Nearness of it is more refreshing to me than the Comforts of the whole World. Surely nothing can more revive my Spirits than to behold the blessed Jesus, the Joy, Life and Beauty of my Soul. Would it not more rejoyce me than Joseph's Wagons did old Jacob?*

O let us labour to be like him. Let's love *Christ's Laws*, that we may not dread, but love his *Appearing*, when he shall come to reckon and call to an account for our Observation or Violation of them. Let us love the *Appearing* and Manifestation of *Christ* in his Ordinances, his Word and Sacraments: love the *Appearing*, Enlargement and Encreasing of his spiritual Kingdom in the World: love his appearing in the *Hearts* and *Lives* of his most faithful and obedient People: love his *Appearing* in our *Houses* and *Families*, and his being formed, and

enthroned in our own *Hearts*, and in the *Hearts* of our nearest and dearest *Friends* and *Relations*; and by earnest and ardent Desire even hasten the coming of the *Day of God*, long for the second coming of the *Lord Christ*, when he shall appear without *Sin* unto *Salvation*, and very heartily pray, and say, *Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly*, Rev. 22. 17, 20. When wilt thou come again, and receive us unto thy self, that where thou art, there we may be also? John 14. 3. Thus I have offer'd to your best Consideration the Certainty and Necessity of a future and final Judgment.

2. I come now to lead you to the Meditation of the great Uncertainty, as to us, of the Time and Season of this Judgment. O think with thy self, that the Son of Man, cometh at an Hour when you think not, Luke 12. 40. That Christ says, Behold I come as a Thief, Rev. 16. 15. That thou knowest not when the Time is: Mark 13. 33. That thou knowest neither the Day nor the Hour wherein your Lord, the Son of Man cometh, Mat. 24. 42. & 25. 13. To particular Judgment, at the Day of Death; or to general Judgment, at the End of the World. That there are indeed Signs of the Times, which shew when it is near; which the faithful are to observe and take notice of, to be instructed by, and to gather comfort from; But that the punctual and precise time is hid from us: and that a considerable Latitude being to be allowed in the Accounts of Time, both as to the Beginning and Ending of them; we can therefore take no exact Measures, nor fix directly upon the very Time and Day, that God hath set in his own purpose to judge the World in.

And here 'twill be useful to thee to consider, that (as *St. Austin* speaks) *The last Day is conceal'd and kept secret from thee, that all other Daies may be observ'd, well-spent and improved by thee; and that there may be a due Trial of thy Faith, and Patience and Obedience, by a Course of holy Living : Whereas if thou knewest certainly the just Term of thy Life, and how long it would be before thou shouldst be called to be judged; thou mightest too probably take Occasion from to defer and put off thy Conversion and Repentance to a few Daies before Death and Judgment, and to live idly, loosely and voluptuously, all the Daies of thy Life till the very last.*

But surely thou wilt reckon now, That the great *Uncertainty* of *Christ's coming* is a notable *Spur* to *Vigilancy* and *Watchfulness* : That now not being secure any one Moment, 'tis thy *Wisdom* to stand upon thy *Watch* continually, lest *Christ* come at a *Time* when thou doest least expect him, and find thee in a *Posture*, incapable of *Mercy* from him, unqualified to receive *Benefit* by his coming.

Frequently and intently think, that the *Time* of thy *Dearth* and *particular Judgment* is very *uncertain* ; That thou knowest not when the *Master of the House* cometh ; at *Even*, or at *Midnight*, or at the *Cock crowing*, or in the *Morning*: *Mark* 13. 35. whether he will call thee in the *Daies of thy Youth*, or in the *Midst* of thy *Daies*, or in *elder Years* ; — Whether he will take thee in thy *Bed*, or at thy *Table*, or in a *Journey* ; At what *Time*, or by what *Means* he will cite and

and summon thee to leave this World, and to come to Judgment. Consider, that thou maiest drop into thy Grave before the fall of the Leaf from the Tree ; Yea, that though now in perfect Health, thou maiest be dead, and doomed and damned before the next Lords-day : that this very Day, this Hour thy Soul may be required of thee, and be presently judged to Heaven, or Hell, and pass immediatly into unchangeable State and Condition ; And that the particular Judgment will consign thee over to the general Judgment, which will be conform to, and a Confirmation of the former for ever : And this will raise and quicken thee to watch alwaies, lest coming suddenly he find thee sleeping, secure in thy Sins ; lest that Day come as a Snare upon thee ? Luke 21. 35. and when thou shalt say, Peace and Safety : then sudden Destruction come upon thee, as a Travail upon a Woman with Child, and thou canst not escape, 1 Thes. 5. 3. This will cause thee to take heed to thy self, lest at any Time thy Heart be overcharg'd with Surfeiting and Drunkenness, and the Cares of this Life, and so that Day come upon thee unawares : To dread the Thoughts of being surprized and taken unprovided by the great and just Judg of Angels and Men. This will help thee to be constantly careful, as to thy Person, that it be such as may find acceptance in that Day ; and careful as to thy Employment, that it be such as is suitable to thy Expectation of Chriit's Coming, and fit to be approved by thy Lord : To be alwaies in a readiness to receive thy Summons, and give up thy Accounts : To reason

and argue thus with thy self; If Christ's Coming should surprize me in such a Course of Sin, what a woful Case should I then be in? Shall I dare to live in that State, which I shall tremble to be found in at the Day of Judgment? Represent thy Judg as standing at the Door, and this will excite thee to watch and pray alwaies, that thou maiest be accounted worthy to escape the Sentence of Condemnation, and to stand before the Son of Man: Luke 21. 36. To pray God to make thee such a wise Virgin, as may timely take care to trim thy Lamp, to furnish thy Vessel with the Oil of Grace, to put on the Wedding garment, and to get thy self araied with that fine Linen, which is the Righteousness of the Saints; that so thou maiest gladly go out to meet the Bridegroom; and when others are unprovided and miserably excluded, thou being ready maiest be admitted by him, and enter with him into the Marriage-Chamber.

*The third of the four last Things, proposed as the subject Matter of Meditation, in order to the right Redemption of Time.*

III. Let Heaven and its Joys be the subject Matter of thy Meditation. And here,

1. Think of the happy Condition of a pious Soul in the State of Separation. Consider seriously, that Christ hath brought Life and immortality to Light, through the Gospel: 2 Tim. 1. 10. That thy Soul will subsist after the Shipwreck of this Body; and that in the State of Separation it shall not droop in an unactive Lethargy, nor be

*numm* without Sence, void of all Apprehension and Operation, and in a drousy, sleepy, joy less, comfortless Condition till the Resurrection: An erroneous Opinion, which *Pope John 23th.* was so stiff and peremptory in, that he not only taught it himself, but procur'd an Order in the *Univerſity of Paris*, that none should take his Degree in Divinity, unless he held it. Do thou believe and consider, that if thou beest a faithful Person thy Soul at its Departure shall change its State for the better, and have a delightful Sense and joyful perception of its good Condition; be quickly with Christ in Paradise, *Luke 23:43.* immediately present with the Lord, *2 Cor. 5. 8.* and forthwith blessed; *Rev. 14. 13.* be carried by a Convoy of Angels into *Abraham's Bosom*, received to him, and entertain'd with him: *Luke 16.22.* That as *Ambassadors*, when they arrive at forreign Courts, are conducted thither by the *Masters of Ceremonies*, so thy holy Soul shall be translated by good Angels into a blessed Mansion, and with *Lazarus* be comforted in that Condition: *ver. 25.* That if thou art a just Person, thy Spirit shall then be made perfect: *Heb. 12.23.* thy Understanding be cleared from Ignorance and Errour, enlarged and illustrated at thy Departure; thy Will be endowed with exact Conformity to the will of God, and with perfect Liberty from all Servitude of Sin, and be troubled no more with doubtful Choice, but fully embrace the Chief Good; thy Affections be duely and firmly plac'd; thy Spirit be gather'd to blessed and perfected Spirits; and be made it self equal to the Angels,



and so become fit Company For them : That thy Soul shall be in an happy Condition, and be *secure*, and certain that it shall never be *disposses'd* and ejected out of it, *depriv'd* or bereaved of it.

*Such Thoughts as these* will never suffer thee to let thy Soul sleep in thy Body, which will surely *wake when it is out of it.* This Meditation is likely to preserve thee from living and acting *sensually* and *brutishly*, as if thy Soul were *material* and *mortal*, and capable of no greater Happiness, or higher Preferment than to be *imprison'd* and *buried* in this gross dull *Flesh*. This will cause thee to take care, that thy Soul may exercise and maintain a due *Superiority* over thy Body; that thy Soul may *keep under thy Body*, and bring it into *subjection*, 1 Cor. 9. 27. and not be *servilely* and *sordidly* subject to it; since thy Soul is able to *live without it*, and shall from the Day of Death till the Day of Resurrection *live better without it* than ever here it *liv'd with it.* This will mind thee to bring thy Soul, which is a *Spirit*, to converse now with the Father of Spirits, and help thee to live like an *Angel* here on Earth, who after Death shalt be as an *Angel of God in Heaven.* Farther; the Consideration of a *State of Bliss* to departed Souls, will make thee labour to become *fit for this State*, by getting thy Soul made *like to God* by true Holiness, that God may *love his own Image* and Likeness in thee, and *delight to do good* to the Soul he loves: By striving to lead a good and *holy* Life here, which is by the Ordination of God the direct and ready Way to an *happy* and eternal Life hereafter: By looking that every Action and carriage

of thy Life, be worthy of thy Hope of eternal Life.

If a State of glorious Immortality were but a Likelyhood and Probability, you would notwithstanding, in all reason, do any thing, suffer any thing, part with any thing, that if at last it should prove a reality, you might make sure of it, and render your self capable of obtaining and enjoying it : because if it should prove true and you should miss of it, no present Enjoyment, could any way countervail the Loss of an eternal State of Bliss. And if it should not prove true, the denying thy self these earthly sensual Pleasures would be no considerable Loss, or great Unhappiness to thee : 'twould be but the Loss of a transitory, short, impure, imperfect Pleasure, which even in this World has Pain and Torment mixt with it, and has often sad Relishes, and a bitter Farewel at the End of it. If there were but a bare probability of such a State, the most obscure Notices, and thy uncertain Hopes of it, were enough to make thee diligently look after it: Surely then thou wilt much more seek and press after it, when God has given thee an absolute Certainty of the Thing, and the highest Satisfaction that can rationally be desired of the Truth of it.

And this Meditation will be a Means, as to fit thee for thy Translation, so to make thee, with St. Paul, have an earnest Desire to depart, to go hence, to go home, Phil. i. 21, 23. To breathe out Calvin's Ejaculation, *Usquequo Domine!* How long, Lord! To cry out as holy Monica did, when she had newly been largely discoursing with her Son St. Austin of the heavenly Kingdom, Son, as far me, I now take no delight in any thing in this Life: *Quid hic facio?* What

I here ; And to use such Words as those of Mr. Herbert.

*What have I left, that I should stay and groan?  
The most of me to Heaven is fled ;  
My Thoughts and Joys are all packt up and gone,  
And for their old Acquaintance plead.*

2. Bend thy Mind to think of the *Resurrection of the Body to a State of Glory*. Consider, that as thy Soul at Death is *not extinguished*, so that thy *dead and buried Body shall not finally perish*, and be quite lost, but at last be reproduced and restor'd again to thee, by the Agency of an *omniscient and omnipotent God* : That if thou *hast done good*, thou shalt *come forth to the Resurrection of Life*, John 5.29. Come out of thy Grave, as *Jonah* out of the Whale's Belly ; as *Daniel* out of the Lions Den ; as *Pharaoh's chief Butler*, yea, as the innocent honest *Joseph*, out of Prison, to an high and honourable Condition.

Think, how the very *same Body* that fell by Death, shall be raised again at the last Day ; as *Lazarus* rose with the *same Body* which had lien in the Grave four Daies ; and as *Christ* rose with the *same Body*, that was crucified and buried : How *congruous* it is to the *Wisdom and Goodness and governing Justice* of God, that the *same Body*, which was *Partner* with the Soul in good Actions, should be a *Sharer* with it in everlasting Rewards : That that very Body, which was the *Temple of the Holy Ghost*, and whose *Members* were the *Members of Christ*, and In-

*strument*

*struments of Righteousness, and did God Service, and labour'd and suffer'd for Christ her, should be raised and rewarded hereafter: And how reasonable to conclude, that God having planted in the Soul a natural Inclination to its own Body, will surely one Day satisfy the Soul's Appetite by reuniting it to the same Body.*

*Think how thy Body shall rise the same for Substance, but not the same for Qualities and Endowments: that it shall be raised in Incorruption, in Glory, in Power, raised a spiritual Body, and put on Immortality: That thou shalt bear the Image of the Heavenly: That this Flesh and Blood shall be changed and altered with a perfective Alteration, that it may be capable of inheriting the Kingdom of God, 1 Cor. 15. 42. 43. 44. 49. 50. That Christ shall change thy vile Body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious Body, Phil. 3. 21. And that thou shalt shine forth as the Sun, in the Kingdom of thy Father, Mat. 13. 43.*

*These Thoughts will warm and affect thy Heart, and move and incline thee to study and endeavour to get thy Soul and Body fitted and qualified for a Participation of a blessed and glorious Resurrection.*

*To get thy Soul now transform'd, and made like unto Christ's gracious Soul, that thy Body hereafter may be transform'd, and made like unto his glorious Body: to get, I say, a sanctified Soul here, that thou maiest not fail of a glorified Body hereafter; for the Body follows the Condition of the Soul: Not to spend thy Time, Care, Cost, Pains, in decking and Adorning, in trimming,*  
and

and beautifying thy *Body*, but to dress and adorn thy *Soul* with true Grace and Holiness here, that so at the Day of *Resurrection* thy *Body* may be made very glorious and beautiful indeed, and then may be changed for the better, never to suffer any change more.

Yea, thy Meditation of the Resurrection of thy *Body*, will make thee labour to get thy *Body sanctified*, that it may be glorified: 'Twill make thee pray, that thy *Body may be preserved blameless unto the Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ*; 1 *Theff.* 5. 23. And cause thee, as thou wouldst have thy *Body rais'd to Glory*, to keep under thy *Body* here, and not to suffer its Members to rise in Rebellion against God: 'Twill help thee to use thy bodily Members *holily here*, that they may fare well and *happily hereafter*: Considering how *unfit* it is, that God should raise the Instruments of Iniquity to a state of glorious Immortality; How *unmeet*, that Christ should take that *Body*, which in this Life vigorously oppos'd him, and busily and violently acted against him, and fashion this wicked *hellish Body* like unto his heavenly and glorious *Body*; How *incongruous*, that they that live after the *Flesh*, *Rom.* 8. 13. and sow to their *Flesh*, should in their *Flesh* see God; that they who use their *Eyes* chiefly to let in sinful Objects, should at the latter Day see God for themselves, and that their *Eyes* should behold him with Comfort and Joy. Thy Meditation concerning the Resurrection, will direct thee to say upon any Temptation, Shall I offer to abuse and dishonour this *Flesh*,

to abuse and dishonour God with *this Flesh*, which I look that God should so highly honour, and greatly glorify at the last Day? Shall I sin against God with *this Body* of mine, which I hope shall shine at the Resurrection as the *Sun* in the Firmament, and as the *Stars* for ever and ever, and be chang'd and fashioned like the glorious Body of *Jesus Christ*?

This will engage thee to strive with the Apostle, if by any means thou maiest attain unto the Resurrection of the Dead, a Resurrection to a glorious immortality, *Phil. 3. 11.*

To study to be just, that thou maiest be Partaker of the Resurrection of the Just: *Acts 24. 15.* To labour to have part in the first, that thou maiest partake of the second Resurrection, *Rev. 20. 6.* To hear now the Voice of the Son of God, speaking by his Word, and Works, and Spirit; and hearing, to live a divine and spiritual Life; that when thou art dead and rotten in thy Grave, thou maiest at last hear his Voice, and come forth to the Resurrection of Life, and lift up thy Head with Joy in the latter Day, *John 5. 25, 28, 29.* To labour to be a true Member of Christ, and to live to Christ, that so thou maiest sleep in Jesus, and by the Power of God be brought from the dead with him: *1 Thes. 4. 14.* To feast and refresh the Bodies of the Poor, that thou maiest be recompensed at the Resurrection of the Just, *Luke 14. 14.* To endeavour to act spiritually and lively, as thou hopest to partake of the Resurrection unto Life: To be careful to have alwaies a Conscience void of Offence,

in Hope and Expectation of an happy Resurrection; *Acts* 24. 15, 16. and, in Intuition of the Promise of it, with the 12. Tribes, to serve God instantly Day and Night: *chap.* 26. *ver.* 7. To refuse at any time to *accept Deliverance*, upon *base* and unworthy *Terms*, and sinful *Conditions*, that thou maiest obtain a *better Resurrection*: *Heb.* 11. 35. To be willing to *put thy Body to any Pains*, Labour, Suffering, for the sake of God and Christ, who will not suffer *so much as thy Body to be a Loser*: To *glorify God in thy Body*, *1 Cor.* 6. 20. since God hath promised to *glorify this Body*: To resolve, that Christ shall be *magnified in thy Body*, whether it be by Life or by Death; *Phil.* 1. 20. since Christ will *raise even thy dead Body*, and give this very Body of thine an abundant *Recompense of Reward* at last: *1 Cor.* 15. 58. In a Word; to have thy *Conversation in Heaven*, from whence thou lookest for thy Lord and Saviour *Jelus Christ*, to *change thy vile Body*. *Phil.* 3. 20, 21.

3. And lastly, *Meditate* much and often of that *perfect State* of heavenly Glory, that is to be *enjoyed upon the Reunion of Soul and Body*. Think, when thy Soul shall recover its own Body, what a glad and *joyful Meeting* there will be of those *old Companions* and intimate Friends, which have been parted and separated so long: and how the *Glory of thy Body* will be an *Addition* to the Joy and *Happiness of thy Soul*: and that from the Day of Resurrection, not only a *Part* but thy *whole Person*, consisting both of Soul and Body, will be settled in a perfectly happy Condition.

(1.) Apply thy Mind to think in general, of enjoying an *Inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for you*; 1 Pet. 1. 4. of taking Possession of an *heavenly Kingdom*, and receiving a *Crown of Life*: That if thou beest a real good Christian, when *Christ who is thy Life shall appear, thou also shalt appear with him in Glory*: Colof. 3. 4. That neither Eye hath seen, nor Ear heard, neither have entered into the Heart of Man, the Things which God hath prepared for them that love him. 1 Cor. 2. 9. Think of an excellent State of heavenly Happiness, which cannot indeed be fully understood, till it is enjoyed; but yet at present is sufficiently revealed to provoke our Desires after it, and to encourage our Endeavours to gain and obtain it.

The Meditation of heavenly Happiness and Glory in the general, will cause thee to beware of such Sins, as will meritoriously exclude thee from the Kingdom of Heaven, and formally unfit thee for the Enjoyment of it: 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10. Gal. 5. 19, 20, 21. Eph. 5. 5, 6. Rev. 21. 27. and will make thee careful to get the Qualifications proper to a Person to whom it belongs, and to perform the necessary indispensable Conditions upon which the promised Benefit depends: To labour to be made meet to be a Partaker of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light; Col. 1. 12. by Grace to become capable and susceptible of Glory: to be born again, that thou maiest see the Kingdom of God: Joh. 3. 3. to be a Vessel of Mercy, fitted and prepared unto Glory: Rom. 9. 23. To bow thy Knees



to God, that *he* would work this *Meetness* and *Fitness*, this *spiritual Aptitude* and *Idoneity* in thee ; that *he* would *prepare thee* for the *Inheritance of the Saints*, an *Inheritance among them which are sanctified* ; *Acts 20. 32.* by making thee *Partaker of effectual Vocation*, *real Regeneration* *gracious Adoption*, and thorough *Sanctification* ; that by *Holiness* *he* would *qualify* and *dispose thee* for *Happiness*.

And *this Meditation* will *incline thee* to put thy self in *God's Way*, to be *made fit* : And when *he begins* to *make thee fit*, to do the best thou canst, *under God*, in his *Strength* and by his *Grace*, to *fit thy self* ; to inquire after the *Means* of eternal *Life*, and to charge thy self with the *Use* of these *Means*, in order to the attaining of this great *End* : To *cleanse* thy self from all *Filthiness*, that thou maiest be *meet* for an *undefiled inheritance* : to keep thy garments *undefiled*, that thou maiest be *worthy* to walk with *Christ in white* : *Rev. 3. 4.* To *glorify God* both in thy *Body* and *Spirit*, that thou maiest receive and inherit the *Promise* of the *Glorification* both of thy *Soul* and *Body*. To endeavour to have thy *Fruit* unto *Holiness*, that thy *End* may be *everlasting Life* : *Rom. 6. 22.* To do *God's Commandments*, that thou maiest be *blessed*, and have *Right to the Tree of Life*, and maiest enter in through the *Gates* into the *City*, *Rev. 22. 14.* By *patient continuance* in well doing, to seek for *Glory*, and *Honour*, and *Immortality*, that *God* may render *eternal Life* to thee, *Rom. 2. 7.* Believing, and considering, that *he that made thee without thee, won't save thee without*  
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out thee; ( a known Saying of St. *Austin* ) that God will never bestow glorious Immortality upon any that are *loth* to look after it; that he will never give eternal Life to any that are *unwilling* to receive it; that he won't make thee happy *against thy Will*; nor *force* Heaven upon thee whether thou wilt or no: That eternal Life is a Thing *well worth* thy looking after; and therefore it is that God will have it *sought for*; and sought for by *well doing*, in a way of Obedience and good Works; And that not only by *Fits* and *Starts*, but by Perseverance or *Continuance* in well-doing, That a Man may as well think to be able to *walk with one Leg*, as ever expect to go to Heaven by a *Faith that is separated from good Works*.

But do not only think of Glory in the *General*, But consider seriously more *particularly*, how upon the Reunion of Soul and Body, thou shalt be made completely happy.

In the Vision of God;

In beholding the glorified humane Nature of Christ;

In the Perfection of thy Knowledg, and the full Satisfaction of all thy rational Desires;

In the blessed Place thou shalt dwell in;

In the blessed Company thou shalt enjoy;

And in the Uninterruption, Perpetuity and Eternity of this blessed State.

Consider,

1. How thou shalt at last be made happy in the Sight of God, *Mat. 5. 8. 1 John 3. 2.* That thy Understanding shall acquiesce in the highest Being: That then thou shalt see him as he is, a

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Fountain of all that is desirable to thy Nature; see him *Face to Face*, know him even as also thou art known: 1 Cor. 13. 12. that in Heaven thou shalt have as clear a Sight of God, and as free Communion with him, as the *State of a Creature* can admit. That though thou shalt not then immediatly see the very *Essence* of God (as the *over-acute* School-men affirm) God being in this respect *invisible* to the *Angels* themselves; who though they be *unspotted* with any Sin, yet the sole *Imbecillity* of their *Nature* and *Creature-state* does hinder such a Sight of God: yet (as the learned *Camero* expresses himself concerning it) thou shalt see God, by *experiencing* who he is, and what he *shows* and *manifests* himself to be to thee: by reaping the blessed Fruit and Benefit of the Divine Power, Wisdom, and Goodness, so far as the *Measure of a Creature* can bear, in the Sanctity of thy Soul, and glorious Immortality of thy Body. And (as the ingenious, judicious *Amyraldus* does very intelligibly explain this Matter) thou shalt see God hereafter in his *glorious Works* and admirable Operations, such as will be the most bright Splendor and beautiful Habitation of Paradise, the Glorification of thy own and others Bodies, the Consecration of the Church with Angels, and especially the glorious Presence of Christ, in whose Manhood will appear as much of the Creator as is possibly visible in the Nature of Man: To which add whatever else there may be, in which the *Majesty* of the Deity shall then *manifest* it self: Which *rare Effects* of the Divinity will certainly lead thee to a clear and full

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Knowledge of God's most excellent Properties, and divine Vertues; his Wisdom and Knowledge, Power and Greatness, Grace and Mercy, Truth and Faithfulness; the Knowledge and Contemplation of which, will Fire and inflame thee with Love to him, and ravish thee with Joy and Delight in him.

Think how hereafter thou shalt see God, and see him as thy God, and chief Good; see God, not with a transient Sight; but see him so as to possess and enjoy him, to close with him, and be united to him, and complacentially to rest in him as thy utmost and perfect End: See God, not by a meer speculative Contemplation of him, but so, as by seeing him to become like unto him, 1 John 3.2. To be changed and transformed into the true and lively Image of him; to be made Partaker, in thy Measure and Proportion, of that Wisdom and Holiness, Love and Goodness, which thou shalt apprehend and behold in him; That thou shalt not only please and delight thy self by looking on some Glory that shall appear before thee, (to use some Words of a learned Doctor) but shalt be made all glorious within, and become thy self a God-like Creature: That thou shalt not behold the Divinity only without thy self, and be made happy by some external Enjoyment of God only; but thou shalt see God within thee, and feel his Power throughly working thee to the same Mind, Will and Desire with himself: That thou shalt see God hereafter, and be like him; and reflecting upon thy self shalt see that thou art like him, and be pleased

pleased and satisfied, joyful and *delighted* in thy Similitude and *Resemblance* of him.

*This Meditation* will move thee, to labour to be *fit* for the perfect Vision and Fruition of God, in the future State of heavenly Glory: To remember to turn away thy Eyes from *beholding Vanity*, as thou lookest to *behold the Divine Glory*: To make it thy Business to follow *Holiness*, without which no Man shall see the Lord; enjoy the glorious Sight, and behold the blessed Face of God, *Heb. 12. 14.* To labour to see God here, that thou maiest be the fitter to see him hereafter: To see him in his *Works*; to search after, behold and admire that infinite *Power, Wisdom, and Goodness*, which are visible and legible in his wonderful Works of *Creation and Providence*: But more especially, to study to see and know God, as he has reveal'd himself in his *Word*: to see his *Holiness* in his *Precepts*, his *Justice* in his *Threatenings*, his *Grace and Goodness* in his *Promises*. Once more; To see and converse with God in his *Ordinances*; to see him, as he presents himself to thy view, and exhibits himself to be seen in the *Sanctuary*; to enjoy Communion and Fellowship with him in the publick solemn *Ordinances* of Prayer, hearing, receiving the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper: And to be always purging thy Sight, clearing thy Eyes, and cleansing thy Soul, endeavouring to become pure in Heart, not defiled by looking after fleshly or worldly Lusts, nor polluted with other foul Mixtures; to be free from *Hypocrisie* and *Uncleanness*, from *Filthiness of the Flesh and Spirit*; in this Sense,

to be pure in heart, that thou maieſt ſee God, *Mat.* 5. 8. Have a *ſpiritual* Sight, and inward Senſe and Taſt, a *ſavoury* affectionate Knowledge of him, and be capable and *receptive* of *Impreſſions* from him; as the *criſtal Spring* eaſily admits the *Sun-beams*, and imbibes its *Raies*; and the *clean Glaſſ* plainly receives the *Species* and Images of any Bodies: To get a *cleanſed purified Soul*, that thou maieſt be *able* to ſee and enjoy God here, and ſo be *fit* for the *Beatifical Viſion* hereafter: To behold in the *Glaſſ* of the *Gospel* the *Glory of the Lord*, and to be *changed into the ſame Image* here, *2 Cor.* 3. 18. As thou hopeſt hereafter to ſee God, ſo as to be *ſatisfied with his Likeneſſ*, *Pſal.* 17. 15.

2. Think how happy thou ſhalt hereafter be in Heaven, by *beholding the glorified humane Nature of Chriſt*: That *when he ſhall appear*, thou ſhalt ſee him as he is, *1 John* 3. 2. See the *Perſon of Chriſt* [ as he is ] in *Oppoſition* to what he was, while he was here on Earth, in the *Form of a Servant*: That if thou beſt a *Servant of the Lamb*, thou ſhalt ſee his *Face* in the *New Jeruſalem*, *Rev.* 22. 3, 4. That thou ſhalt be with him where he is, and ſhalt immediately behold his glory which his Father hath given him, *John* 17. 24.

Sit down, and conſider, when thou ſhalt arrive at the *Court of Heaven*, how transcendent, and raviſhing and *pleaſingly amazing* the heavenly *Glory of Chriſt* will be to thee! That if the *Queen of Sheba* pronounced *Solomon's Servants* happy, becauſe they ſtood continually before him, and heard his *Wiſdom*, and beheld but a temporal

ral, fading, and earthly Glory, 1 Kings 10. 8. How *unspeakable* then *thy Happiness* will be, constantly to behold the Presence, and *heavenly Mediatorial Glory* of *Jesus Christ* ! That if here it be so *sweet* and *pleasant* a Thing *for the Eyes* to behold the *Sun*, Eccl. 11. 7. How pleasant and delightful then it will be, to view and behold the *Sun of Righteousness* ; to look upon the *glorified humane Nature* of *Christ*, which will appear more beautiful, and shine *more bright* than the *Sun* in the Firmament ! If it were so refreshing and *joyful* a Sight to the Faithful in *those Days*, to see and enjoy *Christ*, though in his *State of Humiliation* ; If the *Wise Men* came from far to see *Christ*, though lying in a Manger, Mat. 2. 1. And *Zaccheus* climbed up into a Tree, to see him in the Days of his *Flesh*, Luke 19. 4. And one of the *three Things* which *St. Austin* wish'd he might have seen, was, *Christ in the Flesh* ; Think, how *Christ* in his *Glory* and *Advancement*, will be a more *taking* satisfying Object, than in his *Humility* and *Debasement* : How *strangely* it will affect and delight thee, to see *him* so highly exalted, and vastly *enrich'd*, who *humbled* and *emptied* himself for thy sake, and became very mean and poor, that *thou* through his *Poverty* mightest be made rich : To see that *Body*, that here was laid in a Manger, nail'd to a Cross, and buried in a Sepulchre, now made a most glorious *Body*, and one of the *rarest Sights*, and greatest Wonders in Heaven : To see *Christ* in *Glory*, and *Christ* in *Glory*, *thine* ; thy glorified Head and Lord, and the *Exemplary Cause* of thy Glo-

ification: To see him for thyself, (as Job speaks) Job 19. 27. For thy own unspeakable Good and Comfort: To see him, and be enamour'd of him, and be like unto him; to converse and enjoy Communion with him, and to rejoyce in and with him: To behold his Glory; and not only curiously to gaze upon him, but to be glorified with him; in some proportion, and according to thy capacity, to be made Partaker of the same Glory, and to be admitted to sit with him in his Throne, Rev. 3. 21. Think, what a sublime and notable part of thy Happiness this will be in Heaven. If having not seen Christ, thou lovest him; and believing in him rejoycest with Joy unspeakable, and full of Glory, 1 Pet. 1. 8. O then consider, how thou shalt love and rejoyce in him when thou shalt actually see him, and immediately enjoy him in the heavenly Kingdom.

This Meditation will prevail with thee to labour to become meet and fit for the happy Sight and felicitating Enjoyment of the glorified humane Nature of Christ: 'Twill make thee study to attain to real Holiness of Heart and Life, without which no Man shall see the Lord Jesus Christ in Glory, Heb. 12. 14. 'Twill cause thee to endeavour to be a Partaker of the Divine Nature of Christ, that thou maiest be admitted to be a Spectator and Enjoyer of the glorified humane Nature of Christ: to be in this World, as he was in this World, that at last thou maiest be in the other World, as he is in that World: to purify thy self even as he is pure, if thou hast any Hope in thee to see him as he is, at his Appearance.

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And *this Meditation* will move and encline thee to *labour*, and *love* to *see Christ here*, that thou maiest be *fitted* to have the Honour and Priviledge to *see him hereafter* : To delight to see him now in his *Promises*, to see and enjoy him in his *Gospel-Ordinances*, to behold him in his *Graces* shining in his *Members*, and to see his *Image* formed in thy own *Heart and Life* : Considering, that only *Christ-like Creatures* are in a *Capacity* of being happy with *Christ* in *Glory* : That (as one says well) *God and Christ, without thee, cannot possibly make thee happy* : That it is not the *Person of God and Christ, but their Life and Nature, wherein consists thy formal Happiness*.

And that thou maiest be *fit to see him as he is*, 'twill direct thee at present to *see him as he was* ; to look upon him as humbling himself to the *Death of the Crols*, for thy *Sins* ; till thy *Heart* be kindly *broken for*, and thy *Heart and Life* be truly *broken off* from all thy *Sins* ; and to eye and *imitate* that excellent *Pattern* and rare *Example*, which here he gave thee in every *Action* of his holy *Life*.

3. Freely and largely *meditate*, how happy thou shalt be made hereafter in the great *Advancement and Perfection of thy Knowledg*, and in the *filling up of thy utmost Capacities*, and the *Satisfaction of all thy Desires*. That though now thou *seest through a Glass, darkly* ; and *knowest but in part* ; yet when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away, 1 Cor. 13. 9, 10, 12. As the *Light of Candles and Stars* is done away by the rising of the

the Sun: That though now many *Difficulties* in *Nature*, and *Misteries* in *Scripture*, and *Secrets* and *Wonders* of the *Divine Providence* pose and *non-plus* thee, dazle thy Eyes, and are too high and sublime for thee; yet that in Heaven thou shalt have the *Causes* of *natural* things *manifested* to thee; the deep and profound *Misteries* of *Religion*, and of thy *Redemption* and *Salvation* *revealed* to thee; the *Intricacies* and *Riddles* of *God's Providence* *unfolded* to thee; the *Wisdom*, and *Justice*, and *Goodness* of *God*, in his *darkest* *Dispensations*, and most *inscrutable* and *unsearchable* *Actions*, *cleared up* to thee: That there thou shalt know the *Orders*, *Offices*, *Excellencies* of the *Angels*; and the *Nature*, *Operations*, and *Original* of thy *own Soul*; which is given thee rather to *use*, than to *know*, in this *present World*: That in the state of *Glory*, thy *Understanding* shall be *extraordinarily* and *supernaturally* *illuminated* and *irradiated*, and thy *Knowledge* be wonderfully *increas'd* and *advanced*, and thy *Mind* exceedingly *pleased* and *delighted* both by the *Repetition*, and new *Variety* of *Contemplation*: That in the heavenly *Glory*, the *Divine Manifestations* and *Communications* shall be *ample* and *liberal* enough to fill *all* the *Capacities* and richly to answer *all* the *Desires* of thy most exalted and *perfected* *Faculties*: That there thou shalt never *feel* any *Want* or *Indigence*, but be so *satisfied* as not to be *satiated*, cloyed or glutted: That in Heaven, thou shalt alwaies reckon that thou hast *sufficient* already to make thee *thoroughly* and *compleatly* *happy*; and yet  
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still be receiving new *Additions*, and fresh *Accruments*, and an *Accumulation* of *Satisfaction*: That every *Participation* of *Truth* and *Goodness* will stretch and *distend* the *Capacities* of thy *Soul*, and fit thee for further and *further* *Receptions*: That the *Capacities* of thy *Faculties* shall be continually *widened* and enlarged, and continually *filled* and satisfied, until thou arrivest unto such *Degrees* as thou canst assign *no Measure* unto. This *Meditation* will cause thee to carry thy self so here, that thou maiest be fit to attain a *Perfection* of *Knowledge* hereafter.

To be careful to know *those* *Things* now, which are *necessary* to the *present*, and *preparatory* to the *future* State; and the *Knowledge* of which will abide and *continue*, and be heightened and *perfected* in the other World.

To beg of God, that he would open thy *Eyes* here, enlighten thy *Understanding*; translate thee out of the *Kingdom* of *Darkness*, and turn thee from *Darkness* to *light*: Believing, and considering, that *gross* and *sottish* *Ignorance* here, is an *ill* *Preparation* for *Perfection* of *Knowledge* hereafter; That if now thou wilfully continuest *ignorant* of the very *first* *Principles* of the *Oracles* of God, thou art *unfit* to go in to *perfection*, and to be admitted *another* *day* to the *Understanding* of the *Secrets* and *hidden* *Mysteries* of God: That if now thou makest thy self like a *Beast*, in *Ignorance*; thou wilt be *unmeet* to be made like an *Angel* of God, in the glorious *Perfection* of heavenly *Knowledge*: If now thou *darknest* thy own *Understanding*, and *blindest* thy own *Mind*, thou wilt be *unfit* for

for the perfect Light of the heavenly Glory: It now thou shuttest thy Eyes against the Light, and art afraid to come to the Light, lest thy Deeds should be reprov'd; thou wilt be utterly unmeet to be Partaker of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light; thou wilt only be meet for the Kingdom of Darknes, fit to be cast out into utter Darknes, and to inherit the Blacknes of Darknes for ever: Twill make the labour to get some competent Knowledge here, which will be a good Preparation for perfect compleat Knowledge hereafter: Remembring that to him that hath shall be given; which is true of Knowledge, as well as Grace.

And this Meditation will likewise stir thee up to practice and live up to the Knowledge of those Things, which God hath been pleas'd most clearly to discover, and plainly to reveal in his Word to thee, as any way necessary to thy own and others Edification and Salvation: Thou being assur'd and well perswaded, that practice and doing is the ready way to further Knowing; as to increase thy Knowledge here, Psal. 11. 10. Job. 7. 17. so, to augment thy Knowledge hereafter: Twill cause thee to charge thy self to walk as a Child of the Light, and of the Day; to follow the Light of God's Word and Spirit, that thou maiest be meet to be made Partaker of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light.

The foremention'd Meditation will moreover make thee wise unto Sobriety, repress the itching Curiosity of thy Nature, keep thee from spending thy time in boldly prying into God's Secrets, and from immoderately thirsting and reaching after

the Knowledg of Things *too high* for thee: Remembring and considering, that in this Life thou canst not attain to clear and full and perfect Knowledg, which is a *Reward reserved* for another Life; And that thou maiest enjoy it in *due Time*, 'twill make thee willing to wait and stay *God's Time*; to be humbly, and modestly and *contentedly ignorant* of all those Things wherein God has been *pleased to be silent*, and has *thought most fit*, in this lower imperfect State, for *Man to be ignorant*. The Consideration that thy Knowledg shall be *perfected hereafter* will bring thee at present to be *quietly ignorant* of those Things, which God *sees meet* and most convenient for *a Time* to hide and conceal from thee; and will help thee to *wait* very patiently for the *Season* of the fuller Manifestation of himself to thee; *this being the Way* to have thy Knowledg encreased and perfected another Day.

Further; *This Meditation* will also mind thee, to *fit thyself for the sure receiving the full Satisfaction of all thy Desires in Heaven hereafter*. 'Twill cause thee now to curb and restrain thy sensual Appetite, to moderate thy Desires, to submit thy Will to the Will of God, and to do his Pleasure here, that so thou maiest have thy widest Capacities and largest Desires every way satisfied and fulfilled hereafter.

4. *Meditate* how happy thou shalt be hereafter, by *dwelling* in a most glorious, beauteous, *blessed Place*; in *thy heavenly Father's House*, in *thy Saviour's Father's House*, in which there are *many Mansions*; *John 14. 2. a stately Palace*

Palace, a spacious House indeed, fit to receive and entertain an innumerable Company of glorious Inhabitants: That thou shalt be placed and settled in the Seat of the Blessed, an *House not made with Hands, a Building of God, Paradise, Heaven, the third Heaven*, which is seated not only above the Region of the Air, but above the Moon and highest Stars; from whence thou shalt with *Advantage* take a pleasant Prospect of the admirable Beauty and comely order of the Universe, and of the Usefulness of all its Parts: that thou shalt inhabit a Place which is so incomparably glorious, that it is called in Scripture the *Throne of God*: That thou shalt dwell hereafter in the *better and heavenly Countrey* of the saints: That thou shalt actually and personally enter into the *promised Land*, and not only have a *Pisgah-sight* of it afar off: That thou shalt be translated into the heavenly Canaan, transported into the *holy Land*, conducted and received into the *holy City*, in which there is *no Night*, and which has *no need of the Sun or Moon to shine in it, the Glory of God inlightning it; and the Lamb being the Light thereof*. Think, how the beautiful, glorious, precious Things (of which there is mention in the 21th. and 22th of the Revelation) in the large Description of the new Jerusalem; if meant of the Glory of the *highest Heaven*, are but Umbrages and *Shadows of the good Things to come*, which are contain'd and treasur'd up in the heavenly Kingdom. Though Heaven be indeed more a *State* than a *Place*, yet think, how the *Majesty and Amenity* of the Place of Glory, will add to thy Joy and increase thy Felicity.

And this *Meditation* will provoke thee to labour to become *apt* and *fit* to live in so holy and blessed a Place as Heaven: To be alwaies *travelling* towards this *heavenly Country*, though thy *Way* lie through a *Wildernes*: To make the mention of Heaven, and the *Way* thereto, to be thy frequent *Discourse*, thy most serious and most refreshing *Conference*: To be careful to have thy constant, *Conversation* in Heaven: To give all Diligence to be prepared and disposed by an *heavenly State* for an *heavenly Place*: To let the *Kingdom of God* enter into thy Soul, that thou maiest be *meet* to enter into the *Kingdom of God*: To become the *Temple of God* here, an *habitation of God* through the *Spirit*, that thou maiest be *worthy* to be received hereafter into an *heavenly Habitation*: To cleanse thy self, because *no unclean Thing* can ever enter into that *holy City*: To labour to get such a vertuous Disposition and generous Spirit, such holy Habits, heavenly Customs and divine Manners, as may fit and *qualify* thee to be admitted *Citizen* of the *new Jerusalem*: And to beg thy Father which is in Heaven, that as he hath prepared an Heaven for holy Souls, so he would more and more prepare thy too too unprepared Soul for Heaven,

5. Spend thy Thoughts in the consideration of thy future Enjoyment of the *most blessed Company*, in the most blessed Place. Consider seriously, that as thou shalt have Communion with the blessed *Trinity* in heavenly Glory, fully enjoy God, and have Fellowship with *Jesus Christ* thy *Head*; So thou shalt associate and be conversant

versant with *Angels*, and have sweet Familiarity with those *bleſſed Spirits*; and ſhalt their enjoy the Communion of *Saints*; ſhalt there meet with the holy *Patriarchs*, be received into the goodly Fellowship of the *Prophets*; be taken into the glorious Company of the *Apoſtles*; and be joyned to the noble Army of *Martyrs*; and with all the *Faithful* of all *Ages* recount the *Mercies*, and chaunt the *Prailes* of thy bountiful *Creator*, and gracious *Redeemer*.

Think with thy ſelf, how that good Company is a great part of the Pleaſure and Comfort of a good Man's Life, and a kind of *Heaven* here upon *Earth*: But that hereafter thou ſhalt have the *beſt Company* that *Earth* and *Heaven* can afford; That there thou ſhalt converſe with and delight in the moſt eminent Children, and faithful Servants of God, and famous *Worthies* of the Church of Chriſt: That there thou ſhalt ſee, and know thoſe, whom thou never ſaw'eſt before; ſit down with *Abraham*, and *Iſaac*, and *Jacob* in the Kingdom of *Heaven*: *Mat. 8. 11.* and ſhalt renew a bleſſed Acquaintance with thy old dear Chriſtian Godly Friends and vertuous Relations: Not know them by former Statute, Feature, Favour, (for there will be a vaſt Difference between a mortal and glorified Body; but know them by Revelation, or by the publick Teſtimony that Chriſt ſhall give concerning them, or by Paſſages occurring in ſome Opportunities of Diſcourſe with them: Not know in a worldly or fleſhly Manner, but know and enjoy them in a moſt pure and ſpiritual, divine and heavenly Manner.



And think what a *comfort* it will be, to enjoy Society with *those* in Heaven, with *whom* thou didst use to go frequently to the House of God in Company ! What an Happiness it will be to *meet in Heaven* with those, with whom thou wast wont to *discourse of Heaven* ! to *rejoyce and joyn in Praises* with those in Heaven, whom thou hast often *wept*, and *mourned*, and *prayed with* here on Earth ! What a rejoycing it will be, to see and enjoy *those dear Saints* in the heavenly Glory, *whom* thou wast a Means of bringing thither, or *who* were the Means of bringing *thee* thither ! What a pleasing refreshing Converse it will be in the heavenly *Jerusalem*, to *tell one another* there the most remarkable Stories of the Divine Love, and to *receive* a faithful particular *Relation* of the rare Passages of the Divine Providence, of which the good and vertuous have had Experience in all Ages of the World ! How *kindly* and *sweetly* thou shalt converse with others, when all Corruptions on all sides shall be *removed*, your Judgments and Affections *united*, and your dispositions *exactly suited* ! How *contented* and *satisfied* you shall there be, where you shall live *absolutely free* from all manner of Injury, Envy, Strangeness. Suspicion, Uncharitableness : Where all the Inhabitants shall alwaies live (as one describes that State ) in a *rapturous Love* of God, and a *most passionate Love* of one another : Where every one will be *loving* and every one will be *lovely* : Where every one will *love others* as much as they *deserve*, or *desire* ; and look for no other *Retribution* but a *Reciprocation* of love: and  
where

where all shall rejoyce, not only in their *own* Salvation, but in the Glory and Blessedness of *others*, as if it were *all their own*! Consider that hereafter thou shalt be so pleased with the Place thou shalt be in, and satisfied with the Company thou shalt be with, that thou shalt say in the State of *Glorification*, as *Peter* did in the *Transfiguration*, Mat. 17. 4. Lord, it is good for me to be here: That as thy essential happiness shall consist in the Fruition of God, the Chiefest Good; so, that thy concomitant, circumstantial, accidental Joys will consist in the beauteous Place, and the holy Company thou shalt enjoy: But yet that either the Place or Society of Saints and Angels, can add or confer any Thing to thy Happiness, proceeds from God's special Presence in both.

This Meditation will invite and provoke thee, to make it thy diligent constant Care here upon Earth to fit and prepare thy self for the future Enjoyment of the most holy and blessed Company in the heavenly Glory: To get a Spirit suitable both to the Company and Employment of Heaven: To mortify thy unruly Lusts, and to moderate those violent boisterous Passions, which would cause a kind of Hell in Heaven, and make thee not only restless and uneasy in thy self, but apt and prone to trouble others and to disturb the Peace of that blessed Place: To labour to become truly holy and so to be meet for the heavenly Society: Remembering and considering that scandalous, unholy, disorderly Persons, are by the Divine Ordination, to be excluded from the Communion of Saints even here below, to be shut out from the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, to be denyed the Benefit and Comfort of brotherly Society, and Christian familiar Converse,

Mat. 18. 17. 1 Cor. 5. 5, 11. Rom. 16. 17. And that if by Scandal, and Practice of open Wickedness, thou shouldst render thy self *unfit for present Fellowship* and Communion with the Saints, thou wouldst surely prove *much more unfit* for their perfectly pure and unspotted Society in Heaven hereafter.

And this will cause thee to *keep Company*, and to hold Communion with the *Saints here*, that thou mayest be *fit to enjoy* blessed Communion with them *hereafter*: To shun and avoid the *Company* of the *Wicked*, as a kind of *Hell* here upon *Earth*; to count their *unavoidable Neighbourhood* a daily *Trouble* and an heavy *Burden* to thee: And if any *truly Godly* live in the *Place* where thou dwellest, to find them out, and to *prize* and *improve* them to the utmost: To *sort* and *suit* thy self with those *now*, whom thou wouldst desire to be *ranked* with and gathered to *another Day*: To seek to *live with those here*, whom thou wouldst earnestly wish to *live withal hereafter*: To make account, that *now to live among the Good*, to converse with regenerate sanctified Persons, and real spiritual experimental Christians; and to enjoy God in his People, and Christ in his Members; that this is a great *Happiness*, and a little *Image of Heaven*: To use such *reasoning* as this with thy self; Should I *hate* or *decline* the Communion of *Saints here*, what should I do in *Heaven* at last, where *next* to the Fruition and Enjoyment of God in *Glory*, the *best Entertainment* will be the *Company* and *Society* of blessed and glorified *Saints* to all *Eternity*? This would

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keep thee from *sitting upon Thorns*, when thou art in *Company with gracious Persons*, with serious favoury Christians, and wishing thou wert well rid of thy Trouble ; and would cause thy Heart to *spring and leap* within thee, to see the Face, and hear the *Discourse*, and enjoy the *Converse* and profitable *Company* of the truly Godly : It would direct thee to *chuse and use* such *Company all thy Life long*, that whilst thou liest, (as Dr. Preston said of himself upon his Death-bed) thou maiest only *change thy Place*, and not thy *Company*, This would help thee to labour that God may now dwell in thee: that hereafter, thou maiest dwell in him : That Christ may now dwell in thy Heart by Faith, that thou at last maiest dwell with Christ in Glory: To have at present *Fellowship with the Father*, and with his Son *Jesus Christ*, and with those who have the Image of God and Christ stampt upon them, the Beauty of Holiness and the Glory of Heaven shining in them ; to have thy Soul sympathize, and thy Heart harmonize with them, and thy Affections closely embrace them, and freely run out to them, to love and rejoyce, to meet and confer with them here, that thou mayest be fit to meet their Persons, and to enjoy their holy *Company* and happy *Society* in the heavenly Glory hereafter.

6. And lastly ; Love and delight to enlarge thy Thoughts in the frequent *Meditation* of the *Uninterruption*, *Perpetuity* and *Eternity* of this blessed State : To sit down and consider, that thou hast the Promise of *eternal Life*, *eternal Salvation*, *eternal Glory*, a *continuing City*, an ever-  
last

*lasting Habitation, a House eternal in the Heavens, an Inheritance incorruptible, an everlasting Kingdom, a Crown of Glory, that fadeth not away :* That, if thou art a righteous Person, thou shalt be ever with the Lord, and as a Son abide in thy heavenly Father's House for ever, and reign in the Kingdom of thy Father for ever and ever ; that thou shalt be a Pillar in the Temple of thy God, and go no more out : That if once thou entrest in, thou canst never pass out of that State of Bliss : that the Eternity of thy Felicity, will be the Compleatment of thy Happiness : That there will be no fear of ever losing or relinquishing thy pleasant Possession : That to admit any such Thought, would be a lessening and diminishing, a souring and imbittering the Joys and Delights of that blessed State, and a kind of Hell even in Heaven it self : That therefore in Heaven thou shalt surely live an immortal Life of endless Love, and continual Joy, and perpetual Praise.

*This Meditation* will sweetly constrain thee, to labour earnestly to become meet to enjoy a Perpetuity and Eternity of perfect and consummate heavenly Felicity.

*Twill* make thee mindful to lay the Foundation of Life eternal in thy self here in this World ; to pass from Death to Life even in this Life ; to get the Seed of eternal Life here ; Grace ; the Seed of Glory : to get eternal Life initial, that thou maiest be fit for eternal Life perfectional : To obtain the good Beginnings of Life everlasting, as an earnest in this Life of that which is to follow, and a good Preparati-

or for Life everlasting to be conferred in the World to come : To begin by *Grace* to live here, that thou maiest be fit to live eternally in *Glory* hereafter.

And this Meditation will engage thee to give God here thy whole remaining Time, that thou maiest be fit to enjoy his blessed Eternity : To be careful that there be no voluntary Intercision or Interruption of thy Obedience ; To endeavour to serve God in Holiness and Righteousness before him, all the Daies of thy Life, Luke 1. 75.

Without any wilful departing, backsliding, withdrawing, declining, or moral discontinuance of thy holy and religious walking with him, by gross Neglect of what thou oughtest to do, or by doing the contrary to thy Duty.

This will incline thee to deal with God, as thou wouldst that he should deal with thee ; and move thee to say thus to thy self ; Would I have God

give me Admission into Heaven, and afford me only a Taste of Happiness, and then presently

put an end to those transporting ravishing Joys, and ere long annihilates me, or at least turn me

quite out of Paradise, and for ever deprive me of

that joytul, blisful State and Place, and thrust

me into far a meaner and lower Condition ;

Would I be well contented with this ? If not ;

why then let me not only enter into God's Ser-

vice, but continue therein to my Life's End.

If I expect a perfect perpetual Happiness from

God, is it fit and reasonable, that I should give

God a broken, imperfect, flitting, inconstant O-

bedience ? Would I have God's Goodness last for

ever ? then let not my Goodness be as a Morning

Cloud.

Cloud, and go away as the early Dew, *Hosea 6. 1.*  
 Let not me be off and on with God: Let not  
 me serve him by Fits and Starts, but let my  
 Heart stand always bent for God, and let me  
 perform a constant Course of Obedience to him:  
 Let me not only enter into the Race, and run  
 for a Spurt; and then sit down, or start aside,  
 and fly out of the Way; but let me here hold  
 out to the End, on I shall be unfit for an endless  
 Felicity in another and better World.

The Consideration of all that has been spoken,  
 both in general and particular, of the glorious  
 Happiness of Heaven, will be further of Use  
 and Advantage to thee, as to the Redemption of  
 thy Time, in several respects: for,

(1.) It will hearten and encourage thee to do  
 and suffer any thing for God.

(2.) It will help and enable thee to answer  
 and oppose the fair and furious Temptations of  
 Satan.

(3.) To live in an holy Contempt of this present  
 World; and in the serious, real, visible Exercise  
 of constant heavenly-mindedness.

(4.) And lastly; To live in delightful fore-  
 thoughts and fore-tastes of the Glory to come.

(5.) The foregoing Meditations of a perfect,  
 heavenly, glorious Reward, will quicken and  
 strengthen, hearten and encourage thee to do and  
 suffer any thing for God.

[ 1. ] The serious frequent Consideration of  
 a perfect State of heavenly Glory, will animate  
 and encourage thee to lay out thy self to the utmost  
 for God, and to act vigorously in the performance  
 of thy Duty, in this State of Probation, in which  
 thou art placed in this lower World. All

All the forementioned particulars of this reward, will be so many *Cords* to bind thee to thy Duty; and as so many *Magnetical Hooks* to draw thee to Obedience: Thou wilt up and be doing, upon this Consideration, that there is enough to be gotten by well-doing: Thou wilt *heartily serve the Lord Christ*, that Christ that died for thee, of whom thou knowest thou shalt receive the Reward of the Inheritance, Col 3, 23. 24. who hath promised a reward to the Gift of a Cup of cold Water only, Mat. 10. 42. and therefore will undoubtedly give a great Reward to a constant course of sincere Obedience. Thou wilt be forward to do any thing for the Hope that is laid up for thee in Heaven, Col. 1. 5. considering, that all thy good Duties and faithful Performances shall be found unto Praise, and Honour, and Glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ, 1 Pet. 1. 7.

The deep Thoughts of the heavenly Glory, will render the Duties of Religion *easie* to thee. The Meditation of an everlasting heavenly Rest, will facilitate the Yoke, and lighten the Burden of Christ to thee. The Greatness of thy Reward will lessen and take off the Difficulty of thy Labour. Thou wilt surely think no Task, no Duty, no Diligence, no Care, no Cost, no Pains too much to get to Heaven, which at last will fully make amends for all. Thou wilt strive to do thy best in all thou doest, because, as *Apelles* said of his great care in drawing a very curious Picture, *Pigno Aeternitati*, I Linn for Eternity; so, whatsoever thou doest, thou doest for Glory, Honour, Immortality, a blessed Eternity. If



If by the *Eternity* of thy Felicity, were meant only an *Ævum* of very long Duration, yet it would seem a *weighty Motive* to any considering rational Man, to engage him to Godliness and Christianity, and to oblige him to Industry and Activity : But when the Gospel-revelation does give thee assurance of the perpetuity and *endless Duration* of this Felicity, the due consideration of so great and infinite a Reward, will have a *more forcible* powerful Influence upon thee. It greatly raised, and much affected *David's* heart, to be able to say to God, *Thou hast spoken of thy Servant's House for a great while to come*, 2 Sam. 7. 19. How then is it likely to spirit and encourage thee, to consider that God has spoken of an heavenly Happiness to be bestowed upon thee, that shall *last as long as Eternity itself*, that shall *last as long as God himself*.

The serious Thoughts of a perfect heavenly State of eternal Bliss, will quicken and encourage thee not only to do, but to *suffer any thing* for God, and Christ and the Gospel : to *chuse* with *Moses* rather to suffer Affliction with the People of God, than to enjoy the Pleasures of Sin for a Season ; esteeming the Reproach of Christ (or, for Christ) far greater Riches than any Worldly Treasures out of a respect unto the Recompense of the Reward, Heb. 11. 25, 26. And, with Christ, for the Joy that is set before thee, to endure the Cross, and despise the Shame, c. 12. v. 2. To rejoice to be a Partaker of Christ's Sufferings, that when his Glory shall be revealed, thou mayest be glad also with exceeding joy, 1 Pet. 4. 13. To be ready to take joyfully the spoiling of thy Goods, knowing

in thy self that thou hast in Heaven a better, and an enduring Substance, Heb. 10. 34, 35, 36. But of this I shall speak more under the next Head. That is the first, The serious consideration and earnest expectation of a vast and ample Reward in Heaven, will encourage and enable thee not only to do, but to suffer for Christ Jesus.

(2.) The Consideration of a future perfect heavenly happiness, will help and enable thee to resist and repel both the fair and furious Temptations of Satan. By Meditation, put on for an Helmet the Hope of Salvation, and that will defend thee against the Assaults, and will ward off the Blows of the Devil. It will,

[1.] Enable thee to answer and oppose the subtle and powerful Temptations of Satan, when he fairly promises any pleasing Good to thee. The consideration of what God offers thee, will make thee reject and disdain whatever Satan for the present proffers thee, because he can make no proffer valuable and considerable, equal and answerable to what God has made in the Gospel to thee. This Sun will presently put out the Light of all his twinkling Stars. As Saul said to his Servants, to keep them from falling away to David, Will the Son of Jesse give every one of you Fields, and Vineyards, and make you all Captains of thousands, and Captains of hundreds? 1 Sam. 22. 7. So thou wilt say to thy considering self, are the Devil and the World able to afford me those Honours and Dignities, Riches and Treasures, Delights and Pleasures, and to entertain me with such a Paradise as God hath prepared for me, and promised to me? Are the Devil, and the World, and  
all

all the Pleasures of Sin, which are slight, and short, and last but for a Season, ever able to *make me amends*, if I *make a refusal* of God's kindness? Are they ever able to *countervail*, and make up the Loss of God, and Christ, and the Heavenly Kingdom to me? What's all the outward Splendor and *Glory of this World*, to the incomparable unconceivable *Glory of Heaven*? What are these *Meats and Drinks* here below, to the *celestial Food*, and the full satisfaction of all my spiritual Desires? What signify all the filthy *impure pleasures* here, to the enjoyment of the Society of *immaculate Angels*, and the glorious presence of the *immaculate Lamb* hereafter? How are all the pleasures of Sin, put in the *Ballance* against the Joys of Heaven, but as a *Feather* against a *Mountain*? How poor and *beggary* are all the *Riches* on Earth, to the vast and sure Treasures laid up for me in Heaven? How mean a *Cottage*, what a very *Dungbil* is the most sumptuous Building, and stately *Habitation* here, to the beautiful, spacious, glorious, heavenly *Palace*? What *wile Weeds*, and *sorry Rags*, are the costliest Garments and richest Apparel here, to the white Ornaments, and glorious Robes of Saints triumphant in Heaven? How *contemptible* and *deipicable* is all *Honour with Men*, in comparison of *Honour with God and Angels*? any *secular Preferment*, and worldly Power, in respect of the *heavenly Crown* and Kingdom? What Invitation or Inducement is this *carnal Company* to me, that I should so covet and fondly embrace their Society, to the Loss and Forfeiture of all *blessed Fellowship* with God  
and

and Christ, with Saints and Angels, to all Eternity? Shall I ever become such a meer Bedlam, and humane Beast, as to flight and undervalue a perfect State of heavenly Glory, and to place my Happiness in Sensuality and Flesh-pleasing? Further,

[2.] The Meditation of the high and heavenly Felicity and Glory, will serve to counterpoise the heaviest Temptation, when Satan or his Instruments shall terribly tempt thee, and sharply assault thee, by threatening any great and grievous Evil to thee. If Satan threaten thee with Persecution, with the loss of thy Estate, or of temporal Life it self, this will instruct thee to tell him what Christ himself hath told thee, that Blessed are they which are persecuted for Righteousness sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven: That blessed art thou when men shall revile thee, and persecute thee, and shall say all manner of evil against thee falsely for Christ's sake: that then thou must rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is thy Reward in Heaven, Mat. 5. 10, 11, 12. That every one that hath forsaken Houses, or Brethren, or Sisters, or Father, or Mother, or Wife, or Children, or Lands, for Christ's Names sake, shall receive an hundred-fold, and shall inherit everlasting Life, c. 19. v. 29. That whosoever will save his Life, shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his Life for Christ's sake shall find it, c. 16. 25. It will enable thee to tell the Devil, what the great Apostle of Christ has told thee; That if thou sufferest, thou shalt also reign with Christ, and be glorified with him: but if thou deniest him, he also will deny thee, 2 Tim. 2. 12. That thou reckonest, that  
the

*the Sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the Glory which shall be revealed in thee, Rom. 8. 17, 18. That thy light affliction, which is but for a moment, not only worketh, but worketh out for thee a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory, 2 Cor. 4. 17. This will cause thee to be in nothing terrified by thy Adversaries (the Agents of Satan, and Instruments of the Devil) which is to them an evident Token of Perdition, but to thee of Salvation, and that of God, Phil. 1. 28. The Consideration of a sure, full, everlasting, heavenly Reward, will keep thee from sticking at any Suffering. Satan can never terrifie and dishearten thee with the fear of Death, or temporal Torments; but thou wilt be able patiently to endure, and chearfully to go through any Suffering, if thou doest but weigh the Recompense of Reward, and well consider, that eternal Salvation will richly compensate the suffering Christian. That is the second Advantage of the fore-mentioned Meditations; the consideration of a perfect State of Heavenly Glory, will help and enable thee to resist and repel thee taking, or terrible, the flattering, or affrighting Temptations of Satan.*

(3.) The due Consideration of a perfect State of heavenly Glory, will enable thee to live in an holy Contempt of this present World, and in the serious, real, visible Exercise of constant heavenly-mindedness.

[1.] The often renewed Thoughts of a future perfect heavenly Happiness, will effectually provoke thee to live in a manifest, rational, holy, Contempt of all external and earthly Things;  
and

and in quiet Contentment with what Share and Allowance God allots and affords thee of outward Comforts and Accommodations here in this World.

It will cause thee to *sight* and undervalue the Things of the World, which God in the Gospel has so *disgraced* and *disparaged* ; To despise and condemn them in thy Judgment, Affections, Speeches Actions, *in comparison* of the nobler, richer Things to be enjoyed in the other World. The raised Thoughts of a *celestial Happiness*, will teach thee to take all *sublunary Glory* for a *Shadow*, or a *Dream* ; and move thee to complain of the World's *Dotage* in the *pathetical Words* of that divine Poet,

*But Oh the Folly of distracted Men,  
Who Grievs in earnest, Joies in jest pursue ;  
Preferring, like brute Beasts, a loathsome Den  
Before a Court, ev'n that above so clear,  
Where are no Sorrows, but Delights more true  
Than Miseries are here !*

These Thoughts will preserve thee from being so foolish as to mind *Baubles*, and to follow after *Butter flies* : from being excessively fond and greedy of a tickling, *transient Pleasure* ; from catching earnestly at a *Vapour*, a *Puff* of Honour ; from stooping low to a base and filthy *Clod* of Earth ; from striving over-eagerly for any of this World's Goods, which thou must certainly soon part with, and which if thou couldst hold never so fast, and keep never so long, thou couldst find no solid, real, rational Hap-

Happiness in : From *envying* those that have *their Portion in this Life* : *Psal. 7. 14.* And will cause thee to dread the Thoughts of *receiving thy good Things*, *Luke 16. 25.* *thy Consolation here* : *chap. 6. 24.* To *tremble* to think of going shortly out of this World, and leaving all thou hast behind thee, and of having nothing at all that is *truly good* to reap and receive in another World. The Meditation of heavenly Provisions and Enjoyments, will wean and *loosen* thy Heart from, *deaden* and disaffect it to the *drossy* or *keyy* Things of this base and dull Earth, which are wholly unworthy of the choice Affections of thy heaven born Soul. It will direct thee to use this World, as if thou didst not use it ; to *use* earthly Things, but not to *mind* them, nor with thy *whole Heart* to desire them, nor to place thy *Happiness* in them, nor to *dull* thy *Appetite* to heavenly things by them.

To *consider seriously*, that God has provided such Riches and Treasures in another World for thee, *this* is a likely Means to free thee from *affecting inordinately* Worldly Greatness, and to *moderate* thy Desires and Endeavours after earthly Things ; to enable thee to *live without them*, to *live above them*, to have thy *Conversation* here *without Covetousness*, and to be *content* with such Things as thou hast in thy *Passage* and Way to Heaven, since Heaven will *make up all at last* : Reckoning with thy self, that the *discontent* of thy life would be a kind of rude *Blasphemy* against Heaven ; a pronouncing and *proclaiming* of all the promised *Glory of Heaven*,

ven, what Solomon does of all earthly Glory, that *this also is Vanity*: A telling all the World, that thou verily thinkest, either there is *no Heaven* at all, or that *Heaven is not enough* to satisfy thee. The fixed Thoughts of a promised heavenly Reward, will serve to confirm and stablish thy Heart against worldly excessive Fears, and Cares, and immoderate Labours, for outward and earthly Things; and will prompt thee to argue thus with thy self, Why should I fear the loss of any Thing here in this World, when it is *my Father's good Pleasure to give me a Kingdom*? And why should I doubt of *earthly Necessaries*, when God has allotted and apportioned an *Heavenly Kingdom* to me? If he hath promised me an *Heavenly Kingdom*, he won't with-hold such *temporal Supplies* as are necessary for me in my present Pilgrimage: And what need I cark and care, labour and sweat, toil and trouble my self for meer *Un-necessaries*, and vain and hurtful *Superfluities*?

[2.] The Meditation of a perfect heavenly Happiness, will help thee to live in the serious real visible Exercise of constant heavenly-mindedness; to seek and care for, to savour, and set thy Affections on Things above, Col. 3. 1, 2. to have thy Soul, like the Flame of a Candle, always aspiring upward; to live by Faith; to affect the Kingdom of Heaven (which the primitive Christians had so much in their Hearts and Tongues, that the Heathen suspected they affected Cesar's Empire) to desire a better, that is, an heavenly Countrey, and to look a for City which has Foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God;  
To



To have thy *Conversation in Heaven*; to lead and frame thy Life according to *heavenly Rules and Patterns*, to order and to judge of every thing with *respect had to these heavenly Things*; to be so taken with their Beauty and Excellency, Sweetness and Pleasantness, as to thirst after them with an unsatiable Desire, and to refer *every thing* to the obtainment of them.

(4.) And lastly, If God *hath wrought* such due and requisite *Qualifications* in thee, as may fit and prepare thee for an heavenly State; thy *Meditation* then of a perfect State of heavenly Happiness, will provoke thee to *live in daily thankful, delightful fore-thoughts, and sweet refreshing comfortable fore-tastes* of a perfect State of heavenly Glory, and blessed celestial Immortality. It will invite, and constrain thee to *think and speak well* of God and Religion; to laud and magnifie the Divine Munificence, to admire and extol the Bounty of God, who sweetly and kindly allures thee to Piety by a most ample and inestimable reward, and engages to give thee such *great Wages* for so *little Work*, eternal Life for the Labour and Service of a few Years; an exceeding eternal weight of Glory for such small Pains spent in a short Race; who, though thou maiest sometimes start aside, or stumble in the way, yet will not deny thee thy Reward, nor lessen thy Crown; but if thou doest thy best, will reward thy Sincerity largely and liberally, and will abundantly recompense the very meanest faithful performance, the giving but a Cup of cold Water in the Name of a Disciple. It will excite thee to give thanks

thanks to God, who hath begotten thee again to a lively Hope, and made thee very rich in Hope. It will enable thee to live comfortably, and walk cheerfully, as an Heir of the Promises, an Heir of the Grace of Life, of eternal Life or Glory, which will be bestowed by the free Grace and favour of God: To rejoice with Joy unspeakable, and full of Glory; as one whose Name is written in Heaven, and that hast a Mansion prepared by Christ in Heaven for thee: To rejoice and be exceeding glad, to consider that great is thy Reward in Heaven: To rejoice in the first Fruits of the Spirit, in the earnest of the Spirit, which is the earnest of thy Inheritance given by God as a Pledge, or first part of Payment of that Inheritance which he hath destin'd to thee: To sit down, and expresse and vent thy Thoughts in the feeling affectionate words of the fore-cited sweet Singer,

*If thy first glance so powerful be,*

*A Mirth but open'd, and seal'd up again;*

*What wonders shall we feel, when we shall see*

*Thy full-ey'd Love!*

*When thou shalt look as out of pain,*

*And one Aspect of thine spend in Delight,*

*More than a thousand Sins disburse in Light,*

*In Heaven above!*

If thou shalt use to think much of Heaven, thou wilt rejoice in that Sight which thou gettest of God and Christ here, as a real Pledge of a clearer Vision, and nearer Fruition of God and Christ hereafter: Thou wilt rejoice in that

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Communion

*Communion* which thou holdest with the Saints in the Church here, as an earnest and assurance of thy Fellowship with them in the heavenly Glory hereafter: Thou wilt delight in *that measure* of Spiritual Knowledge, and *those Beginnings* of eternal Life thou attainest here, as *Tokens* and *Pledges* of a perfection of Knowledge, a perfection of Life eternal to be received and enjoyed hereafter: Thy thankful, cheerful Life will answer the Reward, the Riches, the Crown, the Kingdom, which God hath plainly promis'd thee, and given a sure Earnest, and certain Pledge of to thee.

*The last of the four last Things proposed as the subject Matter of Meditation in order to the right Redemption of Time.*

Let Hell and its Torments be the Subject of thy solemn and frequent Meditation, which will be of great Use and Advantage to thee, for preventing the mis-pending, and promoting the right redeeming of thy Time.

Hope of Heaven, and Fear of Hell, are the great Engines apt to turn about our Wills, and the forcible Spring of all our Actions; and nothing so strongly affects as Fear: And we have need enough in this present State, to get every Affection wrought upon, and to use all possible Motives with our selves, for the furthering and promoting the Salvation of our Souls. And therefore surely, she was over hasty, and acted rashly, that ran about the City with a Brand of Fire in one Hand, and a Bottle of Water in the other,

other, and said, *Her business was to set Heaven on fire with the one, and to quench Hell flames with the other, that there might be neither of them lost, only pure Love to move and incite her Piety.* The devout St. Bernard puts us upon a wiser and better course; *Let us go into Hell by Meditation, while we live, says he, that we may not go into Hell when we die.*

Seriously consider, that if thou shouldst prove a *final impenitent Sinner*; when thy Soul shall quit the Tabernacle of thy Body, it shall pass immediately into a *State of Misery*, and dwell in the Region of Devils, and of evil discontented Spirits; and that thou shalt be raised at the last Day to the *Resurrection of Damnation*, *John 5. 29.* to *Shame and everlasting Contempt*, *Dan. 12. 2.* be raised, as a *Malefactor* is fetched out of Prison, to appear in Judgment first, and then to be had to the place of Execution: be raised, though (to use the words of *Minucius Felix*) thou wouldst rather chuse to be annihilated, than to be restored and raised again to Punishment.

That then thou shalt be ranked among the *Goats* on the *left Hand*, and sentenced to depart, *Mat. 25. 41.* That then thou shalt be excluded, and banish'd from the Face and Favour, the comfortable *Presence*, and blessed Enjoyment of God and Christ in Glory, *2 Thes. 1. 9.* That thou shalt suffer the *Loss* of all thy outward and *earthly Enjoyments*; have impetuous *Desires* after terrene and sensual Things still remaining, and yet want the *Objects* which should suit and satisfy, please and gratifie those Desires: But that thy *greatest Punishment* shall consist in the *Loss*

of God and *Christ*, and of all real *substantial Good*, by the Loss of God and Christ, the *chiefest Good*.

Consider further, That thou shalt be forc'd to depart from Christ into *Hell-fire*; not a *purging*, but *plaguing*; not a *purifying*, but *tormenting* Fire: That it will be no small pain, that will arise from an acute Feeling and *lively Sense* of the *unutterable Losses*, and *unrecoverable Damages* thou shalt then sustain by reason of thy Sin; from a quick and terrible Apprehension that thou art bereaved of God, forsaken of Christ, and utterly deprived of all the glorious Good that was so fairly offer'd to thee; and from the sad Consideration, that *they* whom thou didst *despise* and vilifie, and trample on here on Earth, and account the very Off-scouring of the World, *are at last possess'd* and made partakers of that blissful State which thou findest *thy self deprived of*: As it heighened and aggravated *Dives's* Misery, to behold *Lazarus* in *Abraham's Bosom*.

But well consider, That this will not be all; but that there shall be a *real Presence of all Evil*, as well as a privation of all Good: That as all the Members of thy Body, and Powers of thy Soul, have been Weapons of Unrighteousness, so thou shalt be punished in *all the Parts of thy Body*, and *Faculties of thy Soul*; which then shall be made *more capable* of Torment, and shall suffer pain without any Diversion or *Intermission*, *Mitigation* or Relaxation at all, finding *no Rest day nor night*, Rev. 14. 11. That then thou shalt be fill'd with *Horror of Conscience*,  
troubled

troubled and vexed to think and consider, that all the Torments thou indurest are sent in *Vengeance*, and inflicted by Divine Justice by way of *Punishment* for thy wilful Faults, and voluntary Crimes, and according to the measure of them.

And think again; That as thou shalt suffer variety of Punishment, Punishment of *Loss*, and Punishment of *Sense*; so thou shalt undergo extremity of Torment: That thou shalt be forc'd to depart into *Fire*, *the Fire*, emphatically; which whether it shall be *material*, or *metaphorical*, speaks the *sharpness* and severity of thy Torment. That thou shalt be cast into Fire prepar'd; suffer a contrived Punishment, that falls under the solemnity of a Preparation: Prepared by God, the wise and just Lord and Judge: For the Devil and his Angels: A great and inevitable Punishment; such as the Devils must suffer, and such as thou must suffer with the Devils: That if thou servest the Devil here, thou must dwell with him in Hell-fire, *Mat. 25. 41.*

And if it be so great an Affliction to the People of God, who have a true Sense and a right Judgment of Things, to be necessitated to live among the Wicked here in this World, *Pf. 120. 5.* Think then what a grievous Misery it will be to thee, when thy Eyes are open'd in Hell, to see thy self under a necessity of dwelling continually with the Devils, and cursed Fiends of Hell.

Think how it would scare thee almost out of thy wits, to have the Devil frequently appear to thee here; and what Horror then shall fill thy Soul, when thou shalt be banish'd from the

Face of God, and Presence of Christ, and from Angels Sociery, and be joined in *Fellowship* with the Devil and his Angels; be shut up in the darkest Den with that roaring Lion, and be chained with the Devil in fiery Fetters.

Nor will it at all relieve thee, to have Companions in all thy Pain and Distress in Hell: But the more there be that shall suffer with thee there, the less ease and comfort shalt thou enjoy, for (as one of profound Judgment well observes) there will be no Concord or Consort there, nothing but perpetual Discord, which is always so much the greater, by how much the Parties discording are more in number: It being a Thing too well known, that to live in continual Discord, though but with some few, is a kind of Hell here upon Earth.

Think yet further, That thy punishment in Hell will be perpetual, thy torments be endless, as well as easeless; thy Fire everlasting, and unquenchable, Mat. 25. 41, 46. & 3. 12. That thou shalt be tormented in the Lake of Fire and Brimstone, day and night, for ever and ever, Rev. 20. 10. That if it were possible for one Eternity to be spent, for one ever to expire and come to an End, there should be another ever for thee to be tormented in: That in Hell thy Worm shall never die, Mark 9. 44, 46. That thou shalt be punished with everlasting Destruction from the presence of the Lord, 2 Thes. 1. 9. That thou shalt be destroyed in a moral, not in a natural Sense: That thy Essence and Being shall be everlastingly preserv'd; but thou shalt be everlastingly depriv'd of God, and Glory, and

of all that makes to thy *well-being*; and everlastingly afflicted and *punished* with all that tends to thy *ill-being*: That as Nero refus'd to put *Apollonius* to Death, who was very *desirous* to die, because he would not so far *gratise* him: And as *Tiberius Caesar*, when a certain Offendor petition'd him to hasten his Punishment, return'd this Answer, *Nondum tecum redi in gratiam*: Stay, Sir, you and I are not Friends yet: So, if thou provest a *damned* Person, that God won't be mov'd by all thy entreaty to grant a quick and *speedy Dispatch* to thee, nor after thousands and millions of Years spent in Torments, yield to let thee die at last: And that the *Eternity* of thy Torments, will be the *Hell of Hell*, and the very *Sting* of the second Death; That the *Eternity* both of Loss and Sense will even break the very Heart of thee.

If good Men here do grieve and *mourn*, when God *withdraws* and absents himself but for a *moment* from them, think then how lamentably and intolerably it will *perplex* and punish thee, to be *made sensible* hereafter, that God will *hide his Face* from thee *for ever*. That if here thou art *unable to bear* a tedious Fit of the Tooth-ach, Head-ach, Cholick, Gout, or Stone; what then thou wilt do to endure those akings of Heart, and wounds of Spirit, and Convulsions of Conscience, and complicated torments of Soul and Body, which will be the Portion of damned Persons to *eternal Ages*. And if it be so *sad a Misery* for any to be *burnt to Death* here, think then how incomparably *greater a Misery* it will be, to be *always burning* and frying in Hell, and



yet never to be burnt to Death there. Nay, if here to lie long on a Bed of Down, or on a Bed of Roses, and not once to rise in several Years together, would prove a grievous sore Trouble and heavy Affliction; what an overwhelming Thought is this then of *lying in Flames to all Eternity?*

Consider here, that *so great* is the Folly of Man's Mind, and the Hardness of his Heart, and the Power of present sensual Allurements, that *nothing less* than the Threatning of an *endless Misery*, was an apt and fit Instrument of God's ruling and governing the World: That Men would not have been sufficiently awed, and effectually restrain'd and deterr'd from Sin, and kept in order and obedience, if God had not intimated and foretold that the obstinate Sinner shall certainly suffer perpetual Punishment in another World. That it is *too evident*, that the Denunciation even of eternal Pain, and infinite Torment, does *not move and sway the greatest part of Men*; and therefore that the Threatning of *meer Annihilation*, or of some lighter and shorter Punishment would surely have *less prevail'd* and wrought upon the World. And now, when everlasting Punishment is plainly threatned, that the just and holy Law-giver doth not intend to *affright* thee with a *Lie*, or with an *uncertainty*: That his Threatning is not like the *prediction* of an *Almanack*; It may be so, it may be not; But that he meaneth really to execute and inflict the Penalty of eternal Punishment upon thee, in case of thy final Impenitency and Disobedience.

Consider

Consider moreover, That thy Punishment will be *justly* and deservedly *everlasting*, if now thou sinnest with a Mind, and Will, and *Disposition to sin to Eternity*, and wouldst sin on for ever here, and persevere in eternal Contumacy, without end or term, if God should not break off the course of thy Sins, by putting a Period to thy Daies.

That thy eternal Torment will be *reasonable* and equitable, if now when *Life and Death*, an Eternity of Happiness, and an Eternity of Misery are set before thee in this time of thy Trial and Probation, thou art grossly wanting to thy self, slightest and *despise*st eternal Happiness, and so puttest it away from thee for ever, and drawest wilfully eternal Misery upon thy self. If here thou *close*st with what is *present*, and *lettest go* what is *future*, (as that vile and wretched Cardinal did, who preferr'd his present part in *Paris* before his future part in *Paradise*) hadst rather have any thing in *possession*, than never so much in *reversion*; and so greedily catchest at the present Pleasures of Sin for a season, and refusest the Favour of God, and the Joys and Blessedness of the World to come; thou hast *nothing to complain of* for thy Loss of Heaven, but thy *own free Choice*.

And as for *Pain of Sense*, though thou doe not *expressly* chuse it *in its self*, yet if thou chusest it *implicitly* in the *causes* of it; If now thou *chusest that Sin to which such Torment is by the Law of God annex'd*, and deliberately and resolvedly to the very last, eagerly pursuest those sinful Pleasures and Profits, which God hath plainly

told thee will be surely followed with no less than everlasting Torments; And takest *as much* or *more* pains in the ways of Sin to go to Hell, than would have serv'd to get to Heaven; t'ou wilt have *none* to *blame* at last of Cruelty toward thee *but thyself*; *no reason* to cry out of the *Divine Severity*, when thou hast but the *consequents* of thy *wilful choice*: For God puts things to thy *own Choice*, and intreats thee to be careful to *chuse aright*, and will at last only suffer thee to inherit thy *own foolish option*, and *evil choice*, which here thou madest to thy *eternal Ruine*.

Consider once more, That *all Hell is not in another Life*: That if thou beest a wicked Person, thou hast an *Argument within thee* to convince thee that there is an *Hell*, when thy Conscience pains and gripes thee, and is *too hot* for thee: That the present secret Checks, and severe Rebukes of thy own Conscience, are an *Emblem* and Representation, and a kind of *Anticipation* of Hell Torments: That now thou livest even in the *Suburbs* of Hell: That thou feelest the *Vulture* preying betimes upon thee: the *Worm* crawling early in thy Bosom, and beginning to gnaw thee even in this Life: That thou hast an *Aetna*, or *Vesuvius*, at least *in* Sparks of the hellish Fire already kindled in thy own Breast; some prelibations and *foretastes* of those *Vials* of Wrath that are prepared and reserved for thee; some *Drops* let fall upon thee of that *Ocean* of Wrath that is likely at last to overwhelm thee: That thou carriest the *Sulphure* of Hell about thee, and thy *Hell* is *already*.

already, even here upon *Earth*, begun within thee: That though thou beest not *actually* in the very *Place* of Hell, yet thou knowest that *eternal Woes* are due to thee; and findest that this is a *present Torment* to thee, in the midst of thy greatest outward worldly Enjoyments; as a Person is scorch'd with a burning Fever, though he lie upon a Bed of Ivory, in a Chamber richly furnish'd and hung with the finest Tapestry, or adorn'd with rare and curious Pictures, and rendred as delightful and pleasant as can be.

Call here to mind, how some that have been only *sing'd* by this Fire, and have had no more than the *Smell* thereof passing upon them; have been most rueful *amazing Spectacles* to all Beholders, through that *Horror* and *Terrour* of Conscience, which was but an *Image* and *Re-semblance* of Hell-Torments: And if the *beginnings* of these Sorrows be so dreadful here in *this World*; consider how unsufferable then the *full measure* thereof will certainly be in the *World* to come.

Think earnestly and often of these things, and see how *strangely* they will *operate* with thee. Mr. *Bilney* the *Martyr* did diverse times in his Imprisonment, put his *Finger* to the *Flame* of the Candle, to feel and try the Heat of the Fire before his Execution: Do thou by *Meditation* flash Hell-fire in thy own Face, and burn the Brimstone of Hell at thy own Nostrils: Use thy self to serious Thoughts of Hell: Sit down and consider, whether thou art able to bear those Torments, to dwell with that consuming

suming Fire, to abide with those everlasting Burnings. Pursue these Thoughts, and often renew and repeat these Considerations; and this is likely to startle and awaken thee, to rouse and raise thee out of thy carnal Security. Labour by Meditation to *presentiate*, and to *realize* the intolerable Torments of Hell to thy self; and work the Thoughts of the Things forementioned upon thy Heart, until thou art suitably affected with them, and fully resolv'd to answer the Ends of the Threatning of them.

Thy Meditation of Hell-torments will be apt to beget stirring and lively Affections in thee: It will be useful to with-hold or with-draw thee from Sin, which has such a dreadful Issue; To keep, or take thee off from living in such a course, wherein every Act is a step to Perdition: To restrain thee from great Sins especially. Thou wilt not chuse to live without God in this World, for fear thou shouldst be forc'd to live without God in the other World. Thou wilt not dare to continue in wilful Ignorance, or Disobedience, considering that Christ will come in flaming Fire, to take Vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of Christ, 2 Thes. 1. 8, 9. Thou wilt not give way to Unbelief, considering it is the damning Sin; Nor live and die in wilful Impenitency, lest thou perish eternally. Thou wilt not surely be boldly guilty of such open Profaneness and gross Impiety, as to bid God damn thee, damn thee Body and Soul; and the Devil take thee: Thou wilt never use such cursed Forms of Speech thy self; and wilt tremble to hear such horrid, and worse

worse than hellish Words, proceed from the Mouths of mad and desperate Sinners. Nor wilt thou offer to cherish and nourish hidden *Hypocrisie*; since *Hell* is prepar'd of purpose for *Hypocrites*, and the Punishment of *Hypocrites* is made the *Standard* of the *Infernal* Sufferings of other Sinners; whose portion shall be appointed with *Hypocrites*, Mat. 24. 51. Thou wilt not indulge thy self in *Sensuality* and *Voluptuousness*, which has a terrible *Woe* denounc'd against it, *Isa.* 5. 11, 12, 14. Thou wilt not destroy thy *Soul* for the Pampering of thy *Body*, lossfulness of *Joy* for the pleasing of a single *Sense*, rivers of *Pleasures* for a superfluous Cup of *Drink*, *Pleasures* at *God's* right hand for evermore, for the *Pleasures* of *Sin* which are but for a *season*, for a minute, for a moment. Thou wilt not take thy *short Pleasure*, to pay so dear as to suffer *eternal Pain* for it. Thou wilt not allow thy self in *Intemperance*; Nor venture to walk after the flesh in the *Lust* of *Uncleanness*, remembering that the *Lord* knoweth how to reserve such *Persons* chiefly unto the *Day* of *Judgment* to be punished, 2 *Pet.* 2. 9, 10. And well knowing, that neither *Fornicators*, nor *Adulterers*, shall inherit the *Kingdom* of *God*, 1 *Cor.* 6. 9, 10. Thou wilt not burn in the fire of *Lust*, lest at last thou beest scorch'd in the flames of *Hell*: Thou wilt set the *Fire* of *Hell* in opposition to the *Fire* of *Lust*, that the one may abate and put out the other. As it is storied of a vertuous *Christian Woman*, that being tempted, and earnestly solicited to yield to commit Folly with a certain *Wanton*, who made profession of great Love to her

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her, and how ready he was to do any thing for her sake. To convince him, and to deliver her self out of the Temptation, she strait requested this *one thing* of him, that he would hold the *Tip of his Finger* in the *Flame* of the *Candle* for *one Quarter* of an Hour : He shrunk, and wondered at the Proposition : But *if you be loth*, said she, *at my desire to indure such Pain for a Quarter of an Hour, how can you expect that I, for your pleasure, should expose my self to suffer for ever in Soul and Body, the Wrath of God, and the eternal Flames of Hell-fire.* Thou wilt resolve deliberately, and endeavour carefully to refrain *bad Company*. When ever idle and evil Companions tempt thee, and say, *Come, to thee*, thou wilt be ready to think presently how Christ will say at Last Day, *Depart from me.* Thou wilt take heed of doing the *Devils Work*, for fear of suffering the *Devils Punishment*. Thou wilt have no Intimacy and Familiarity with the *Devil* now ; thou wilt not give him *heart-room*, nor *house-room*, lest thou beest *compell'd* to bear him company in *Hell-fire* for ever hereafter. Thou wilt by no means be of the *Devils Party*, nor side and associate with the *Ungodly*, and so deserve to be kept and continued in *that Society*, which was formerly *chosen* by thee, and acceptable to thee. Thou wilt also zealously flee *Idolatry*, and hate and abominate *that Religion* wherein the practice of *gross Idolatry* is made necessary ; the Worshipping of Images, of Bread and Wine in the Eucharist, the Worshipping and Invocating of Saints and Angels ; Considering, that *Idolaters* are:

are of the Number of those that shall not inherit the Kingdom of God, 1 Cor. 6. 9. but are appointed to have their part in the Lake which burneth with Fire and Brimstone, Rev. 21. 8. Nor wilt thou fall inconsiderately into damnable Heresie, nor hold so grossly corrupt Opinions as may bring upon thee swift Destruction; 2 Pet. 2. 1. nor be deluded to believe the Lies of Antichrist, to thy utter perishing, and eternal undoing, 2 Thef. 2. 10, 12. Thou wilt abhor wilful Lying, to save thy Credit, or get Gain; and hate to set thy Servants to tell Lies, to vend thy Wares, and put off thy Commodities. Thou wilt be loth, by a gainful Lie, to cheat thy Brother of Twelve-pence, and to lose thy Soul by the bargain, remembering that Lying is a damnable Sin, and that all Liars shall have their part in the Lake which burneth with Fire and Brimstone; which is the second Death. Rev. 21. 8.

Thou wilt be fearful of speaking any thing that looks like Detraction; still minding thy self, that *Whisperers* and *Back-biters* are join'd in the Catalogue with *Haters of God*, who are worthy of Death, Rom. 1. 29, 30, 32. And that he that *Back-biteth with his Tongue*, and *taketh up a Reproach against his Neighbour*, is not likely to dwell in Gods holy City, Pl. 15. 1, 3. That if thou shouldst prove such a *Devil Incarnate*, thou wilt be fit to keep company perpetually with the *Devil and his Angels*: That if thy Tongue should here be so set on Fire of Hell, it would presage that without Repentance and Reformation, it will surely be set on Fire in Hell.

Thou:



Thou wilt watch against the rising of *rash Anger*, which is a *Sin* that has *Hell* at the heels of it ; and be careful to prevent its breaking out in Expression or Action ; revolving in thy Mind that of thy Saviour, *Mat. 5. 22. Who-soever shall say, Thou Fool, to his Brother, shall be in danger of Hell-fire.* Thou wilt dread the Thoughts of *Unfruitfulness* under Means, having fixed and imprinted this in thy Mind, That every Tree which bringeth not forth good Fruit is hewn down, and cast into the Fire, *Mat. 3. 10.* And that *Capernaum*, which was exalted unto Heaven by her enjoyment of special Means, was threatened for want of answerable Improvement to be brought down to Hell, *c. 11. v. 23.* Thou wilt not harden thy Heart in *Unmercifulness* ; pondering in thine Heart how *Dives* in Hell wanted the refreshment of a Drop of Water, for refusing to give poor *Lazarus* the small comfort of a Crumb of Bread, when he himself fared so sumptuously, and feasted deliciously every Day. Thou wilt not be *unmerciful* in not giving ; Nor in not forgiving ; never forgetting how the wicked uncompassionate Servant in the Parable was delivered by his Lord to the Tormentors. Thou wilt strive and labour against *sinful Fearfulness*, and not be drawn to do any Evil, or omit any Good against clear and full Light of Conscience, for Fear of any outward Trouble or Danger ; re-collecting in thy Thoughts, that the Fearful shall have their part in the Lake which burneth with Fire and Brimstone, *Rev. 21. 8.* Thou wilt be ready to set the Fear of God, and the

Fear.

Fear of Hell against all carnal Fear of Men, or of any temporal Evil whatsoever, *Mat. 10. 28. Luke 12. 5.* As the Primitive *Martyrs* did; who when they were solicited by Heathen *Emperours* to sacrifice to their Idols, with these Arguments, That then they should save their Houses and Lands, and Liberties and Lives, but should otherwise lose all; They put off all with this Answer, *Pardon us, O Emperour, you threaten a Prison to us, but God threatens Hell to us.* So *Biblis* (as *Eusebius* relates the Story) a Woman who having fainted before, and renounced her Profession of Christianity, out of fear of suffering Persecution, and being brought to the Place where the Christians Bodies were burnt to Ashes, that others might be drawn from their Profession by means of her expected publick Blasphemous Denial and Recantation; was, at the very Hour of Suffering, thoroughly awaken'd as out of a dead Sleep, by the sight of those Flames which were the Instruments of the *Martyrs* Torments, to consider the intolerable eternal Torture of Hell-fire, which she must unavoidably suffer, if she should dishonour *Christ* and his Religion, and asperse the innocent and unblameable Professors of it: And thus expelling the lesser fear by the greater, and happily returning unto her self, she disappointed her Persecutors Expectation; and by being Faithful unto Death, obtain'd the Crown of a Martyr of *Jesus*, and animated others to endure the Cross with Christian Fortitude, and the Patience of the Saints. Fix thy Cogitations on the Infernal Flames, and this will  
make

make thee resolve and determine to chuse rather to *do*, or *suffer any thing here*, than to *suffer the sad and bitter Pains of Hell hereafter*: Concluding, that the *Pains and Difficulties of Duty*, are no way comparable to the troublesome uneasie Condition, and piercing raging *Pains of Hell*: yea, that the *Suffering of Martyrdom here*, is a light Affliction to the dreadful *Suffering of Hell-fire hereafter*.

The serious frequent Meditation of the exquisite Punishments, and dolorous Torments of Hell, will moreover powerfully perswade thee to be far from *envying* the greatest Prosperity of wicked Men; who shall one day *change* their present Felicity for extream Want, and utmost Misery; lose the Presence of God and Christ, and the full Fruition of *endless Pleasures in Heaven*, and suffer an *Eternity* of distracting Pains, and racking heart-renting Torments in Hell, for a few bitter-sweet *transient Pleasures here on Earth*. Yea, this will help thee to bear any outward Affliction *patiently*, and quietly to accept of any temporal Punishment of thy Iniquity; considering, thou *deservest Hell* it self, and that all thy present Straits and Sufferings are nothing to the Wants and Losses, the Pains and Miseries, of damned Persons. That eminent Pattern of Christian Patience, the holy Mr. *Jeremy Whitaker*, did humbly adore Gods Goodness in the midst of his sorest sharpest Sufferings, and violent, excruciating, racking and grinding Pains, which were caus'd and continued by a complication of acute Diseases, the Stone, Ulcer, Gangrene;

Gangrene; and expressed himself with marvellous Meekness in such Words as these; Lord, thou givest me no occasion to have any hard Thoughts of thee. O who would not even in Burnings, have honourable Thoughts of God? Blessed be God there is nothing of Hell in all this.

Again; This will thoroughly awaken and quicken thee to take heed of beginning that Hell here, which will be compleated and consummated hereafter: of being now of an *hellish frame* and temper of Mind: of departing from, and living without God and Christ; which is not only Man's Sin, but *Misery*; which is a very *Hell upon Earth*, and will be a great part of the future Hell: of contracting and strengthening *vicious habits* here, and of exposing thy self to the Misery that naturally arises from Sin; to the Rebukes and Upbraidings of a guilty Conscience: Considering with thy self, that an *hellish Temper* and Disposition, if thou livest and diest in that Condition, will surely continue and be confirmed in the other World; and that an *hellish State* will prepare thee for and bring thee to the place of Hell. This, will also engage thee to bless God for Christ, for giving his only begotten Son to deliver thee from the Wrath to come, by suffering Tribulation and Anguish for thee, 1 Thes. 1. 10. and not appointing thee to Wrath, but to obtain Salvation by Jesus Christ, chap. 5. ver. 9. And to be truly thankful to Jesus Christ, who condescended to be forsaken of God, that thou mightest not be totally deserted, and eternally forsaken of him; and endured the Fire of God's Wrath, that thou mightst be perfectly freed for ever

ever from *Hell-fire*. This will provoke thee by Faith and Repentance, and bringing forth Fruits meet for Repentance, to flee from the *Wrath* to come, *Mat. 3. 7, 8.* and to seek to escape the *Damnation of Hell*. And this will cause thee to hate and abandon the cursed Arts and wicked Waies of making others the Children of Hell; chap. 23. 15. to dread the Thoughts of ever becoming the unhappy Instruments of hurrying any others to Hell: And will incline thee, in *Pity* and *Charity* to the Souls of Sinners, to do thy best, by all means possible, to keep all about thee from running and falling into that place of Torment: *Luke 16. 28.* to be zealous and industrious to save Souls from Death, *James 5. 20.* to save them with Fear, pulling them out of the Fire; *Jude 23.* As the Angels of old pluckt lingring Lot out of Sodom, *Gen. 19. 16.* Not to suffer thy Neighbour ever to go to Hell quietly; but rather to terrify thy sinful Brother, than to permit him to miscarry for ever.

*Obj.* But is not this a slavish Temper, to be moved to my Duty out of Fear of Hell? Should not the Love of God be the principle that acts us? and perfect Love is said to cast out Fear, *1 John 4. 18.*

I answer; When all the Motives and Incentives that possibly can be made use of, will scarcely effectually put us upon Duty; surely we have little reason to let go or lay aside any one of them; but to use whatever may work upon us, Love, or Hope, or Fear. And as for a Christians Love to God, it does not here exclude all Fear, because it is not perfect in this Life. It will indeed

indeed in the future Life cast out all Fear of Damnation : And it may be so perfect in this Life, as to banish and expel all distrustful tormenting Fear ; which consisteth in terrifying disquieting Apprehensions that God will deal with a Man as a Slave ; take Advantages of him, condemn and destroy him whenever he does amiss : But the true sincere Love of God is fairly consistent with a filial, cautelous, preserving, preventing Fear. A judicious Divine well observes, that it is a great Mistake to think that filial Fear is only the Fear of temporal Chastisement, and that all Fear of Hell is slavish : Even filial Fear is a Fear of Hell ; which yet is join'd with such a Perswasion of God's Love in to us, that we conclude he will not cast us off upon every provocation ; and is accompanied with some Love in us to God, and with Care and Watchfulness, lest we should by Apostasy and final Impenitency miscarry eternally,

*The ninth Direction.*

If you would redeem the Time, you must endeavour to spiritualize your common and ordinary worldly Employments : and must take care that your natural, as well as civil, Actions partake of Religion.

1. You must endeavour to spiritualize your ordinary civil or domestical Employments, by doing them all in Obedience of Faith, and making them the Instruments, whereby to shew forth your Honesty, Equity, Righteousness, Justice, and whatever Vertues may be exercis'd therein. You must make conscience to follow your calling out of an awful respect to the Command of God ;

God; to do what you do even in civil Business in the Name of Christ as the Work of Christ, so as you may say at that time, Now I am about the Work of God, and of Jesus Christ: I thank God, my Conscience bears me witness I am acting in Obedience to Christ, expecting a Blessing from Christ upon what I do: and I look to receive a Reward from Christ. The Apostle commands Servants, whatsoever they do for Men, to do it heartily, as to the Lord; to serve the Lord Christ in the Service they do to their earthly Matters, Col. 3. 23, 24.

Thus to work for God and Christ, is for that time to honour God and Christ as much, nay more, by the meanest servile worldly Act, than if you should spend all that time in Prayer, Meditation, or any other spiritual Employment, to which you had no sufficient Call at such a time. The devout Herbert, in one of his sacred Poems, desiring God to teach him, what he did in any thing, to do it as for him; expresses himself thus sweetly and spiritually:

*All may of thee partake:  
Nothing can be so mean,  
Which with this Tincture (for thy sake)  
Will not grow bright and clean.*

*A Servant with this Clause  
Makes Drudgery divine.  
Who sweeps a Room, as for thy Laws,  
Makes that and th' Action fine.*

*This is the famous Stone*

*That turneth all to Gold :*

*For that which God doth touch and own  
Cannot for less be told.*

2. We must take care, that our *natural*, as well as Civil or Oeconomical, *Actions partake of Religion* ; be inscribed with *Holiness unto the Lord*, Zach. 14. 20, 21. and, by the *purity of our end* and intention therein, become as acceptable *Sacrifices* unto God : That on all occasions we eat and drink, not merely to indulge and gratifie our Appetite, *as it is a sensitive Appetite* ; not only, or chiefly to *please our Taste* : That we do not cover a Business of *Pleasure*, under a pretence of preserving *Health*, or the fair colour of supplying Nature (as St. *Austin* confesses he found himself too apt to do) And more especially, that we never offer to *pamper our Bodies* that we may be the *stronger to serve our Lusts* : That we do not eat and drink our selves either *into Lust*, or *out of Duty* : But that we take our *Meat* as our *Medicine* : (as St. *Austin* acknowledges God had taught him to do) use *Meat and Drink* as *remedies to cure natural Infirmities*, not to *cause moral Distempers*, Eccl. 10. 17. as means to *sustain and refresh our Bodies*, that our Bodies may be fit to *serve our Souls* ; and our selves may be enabled with vigour and alacrity to *serve and honour God*, in the proper Duties of our particular Places.

We should eat our *Bread before God* (as the Expression is *Exod. 18. 12.*) that is, not only as in

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the sight of God, but (as the Apostle speaks) whether we eat or drink, we should do all to the Glory of God, Cor. 10. 31.

Remember to direct these *natural Actions* to *spiritual Ends*, and to make them an *occasion* of *some Exercise of Religion*. Be never wanting to beg a *Blessing of God* before you eat: And when you sit at Table (as St. Bernard advises) be not wholly employed in eating and drinking; but your Body requiring, and receiving its due repast, let not your Mind neglect its proper refection. Refresh your Soul, when you feed your Body, and use such holy Meditations, as may keep and preserve you from *nourishing your Hearts*, Jam. 5. 5. from *ministring fuel* to your Lusts, and *making provision for the Flesh to fulfil the Lusts thereof*, Rom. 13. 14. Mr. Fox reports of the holy Bradford, that in the midst of Dinner he used often to muse with himself, having his Hat over his Eyes, from whence came commonly plenty of Tears dropping on his Trencher.

Whenever you recruit and repair your Nature, strive then to provoke and stir up in thy self and others *hungerings and thirstings after Righteousness*, Mat. 5. 5. Remember, meditate, and discourse of the *Sweetness of Christ*, of the *refreshing strengthening Ordinances of Christ*, of being abundantly satisfied with the *Fatness of God's House*, and of drinking of the *River of his Pleasures*, Pl. 36. 8. of feeding and living by Faith on the *Promises of the Gospel*, and receiving the *Comforts of the Scriptures*, Rom. 15. 4. With Job, esteem the *Words of God's Mouth* more than thy necessary Food, or appointed Portion,

tion, *Job 23. 12.* With *David*, acknowledge the *Laws and Judgments* of God to be *sweeter than Honey, and the Honey-comb*; - than the sweetest and purest *Honey*, *Pf. 19. 10.* Think, and speak of the *living Bread* which came down from *Heaven*, of the *Bread of Life*, *Joh. 6. 48, 50, 51.* the *Water of Life*, *Rev. 21. 6. & c. 22. 17.* Of *Spiritual Wine* and *Milk*, *Isa. 55. 1.* *Desire the sincere Milk of the Word*, that you may grow thereby, *1 Pet. 2. 2.* Have a longing mind to that *Spiritual Food* which is *Meat* indeed, and *Drink* indeed, *Joh. 6. 55.* Taste and relish the *hidden Manna*, *Rev. 2. 17.* Delight thy self in the serious Fore-thoughts of *sitting down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the Kingdom of Heaven*, *Mat. 8. 11.* Of *eating and drinking at Christ's Table in his Kingdom*, *Luke 22. 30.* Raise and lift up thy Mind to the *Celestial Table*; strengthen and sharpen thy Appetite to the most delicious heavenly Banquets: Let the Consideration and Hope of the *Spiritual Joys*, and purer higher Pleasures of the other World, cause thee to *despise* these gross and brutish Pleasures; to say in the Words, and with the Affection and Spirit of *Mr. Herbert*,

*What is this weary World, this Meat and Drink,  
That Chains us by the Teeth so fast?*

*Look on Meat, think it Dirt, then eat a Bit,  
And say withal, Earth to Earth I commit.*

Entertain thy self with *better fare*, and richer cheer. Thank God you have *meat to eat*  
U *which*

which the World knows not of, Joh. 4. 32. Let others labour for the Meat which perisheth, but do thou resolve rather to labour for that Meat which endureth to everlasting Life, c. 6. v. 27. Account and reckon it thy Meat and Drink, with thy blessed Saviour, to do the Will of thy heavenly Father, c. 4. v. 34. And with him have a greater care of making provision for others Souls, than of supplying thy own bodily Necessities, v. 31. 32.

When at usual seasons thou nourishest thy Body, be sure thou doest not then forget to nourish up thy self and others in wholesome Words, in the Words of Faith, and of good Doctrine, which is according to Godliness, 1 Tim. 4. 6. & c. 6. v. 3. Even while thou art feeding thy Body, as thou hast occasion and opportunity, let thy Lips feed many, Prov. 10. 21. I remember Cicero introduceth Cato, giving this good account of himself, that he loved to Feast with his Friends and Neighbours, not so much for the corporal Pleasure of eating and drinking, as for the delight and refreshment of the good Discourses that were used among them at such Meetings.

And Tertullian informs us, that much of Religion was mingled with the Meals, the very common Meals of the Primitive Christians: That they did not offer to take their Meat before they had tasted the spiritual sweetnesse of Prayer and Devotion: That they fed as those who well remembred, that they were to go upon their Knees to God, before they went to Bed: and therefore narrowly watch'd over themselves, that

no degrees of Intemperance at Supper might dull and indispose them to the Duty of Prayer, and unfit them for the Worship and Service of God that Night: *That they talk'd and conferr'd as those that knew God heard*: And after Supper, as any was able either out of the holy Scriptures, or out of his own Invention, he was called forth into the midst of the Company, to sing a Psalm or Hymn to God; which was a manifest Proof what temperate measures he had at that Meeting kept in drinking; having loaden neither his Stomach, nor his Understanding. Prayer in like manner dismiss'd the Company: who then departed with settled dispositions, and firm resolutions to lead most modest, chaste, vertuous, godly Lives: as those who at that very season had not so much made a Meal as kept a Discipline: had at that time been at a Lecture, rather than at a Supper; and then had more replenish'd their Souls, than satisfied their Bodies. And both Possidonius and Erasmus certifie us concerning St. Austin, that he had a Table richly furnish'd rather with fruitful Discourses than exquisite Dainties: That he took great care that their Table-talk should be serious and pious, or some way profitable, at least charitable and innocent: To which end he ordered that a certain Distich, or two Verses, should be written on it, or hung at it, as a necessary Law, forbidding those that fed at his Table to gnaw the good Names of others, or to fasten their Teeth in them by back-biting of them, by detracting from, or speaking evil of absent Persons: A Disease (as Erasmus there well observes) almost peculiar to those who

otherwise make a profession of Piety, when nothing is more alien from true Piety : for this *Pest* usually steals upon men under a *shew* of *Probity*, and guise of Goodness ; while it would appear to be an *hatred of Vices*, and a *Zeal of Vertue*. Which great Evil was so abhor'd by this holy Man, that sometimes he would not yield to the *Authority* of the very *Bishops* ; but when some of his most familiar *Fellow-Bishops* were forgetful of that *Writing*, and spake what was not agreeable to the Direction of it ; he would very sharply reprehend them, and be so mov'd as to tell them, Let them either blot out those written *Verses*, or he would rise from the *Table* in the midst of his *Refection*, and go to his *Chamber*, if they would not forbear such *Tales* and *Stories*. He would not suffer his *Table* to be polluted with such *Talk* ; but either required some *Scripture* to be read while he sat at *Table*, or held some useful *Disputation*, or discours'd concerning some fruitful *Matter* at *Meals*, that the *Minds* of his *Guests* might be no less refresh'd than their *Bodies*. How instructive and edifying were the *Table-colloquies* of the excellent *Luther*, and the holy *Mr. Greenham* ? And *Dr. Bernard* acquaints us, that the *Discourses* which daily fell from *Bp. Usher* at his *Table*, in the clearing of *Difficulties* in the *Scripture*, and other *Subjects* (especially when *Learned Men* came to visit him) were of great advantage to such as were capable of them : To others he would apply and accommodate himself with wonderful *Humility* and *Condescension* to their meaner *Capacities*,

cities, to inform and satisfie their Minds, and to work upon their Affections in practical Matters ; and in his Discourses would sometimes rather incline toward such, than to others more Learned, It put me often in mind (says that worthy Doctor) of that Speech of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon : Happy are these thy Servants that continually stand about thee and hear thy Wisdom.

We should all ordinarily stir up our selves to use *savoury Expressions*, and shew *holy Affections*, when we are eating : We should still taste and commend the Goodness of God in the variety of his Creatures we partake of, and give God solemn hearty thanks after every Meal for his Fatherly care of us, and seasonable bountiful Provision for us and ours ; and charge our selves to spend the Strength we receive from his Creatures in doing him faithful and chearful Service.

And as we should be Spiritual and Heavenly in eating and drinking, so we should use *Recreations* and *Steep* to *holy ends* ; that by doing for the present little or nothing, we may become more apt to do some good thing, to be usefully occupied, and worthily employd.

#### The Tenth Direction.

If we would wisely redeem the Time, we must make a good Choice of our Friends and Acquaintance, and a good Improvement of our Company and Society.

1. *A good Choice of our Friends and Acquaintance.* The sense Man has of his own Weakness and Indigency, makes him *naturally* much *addicted* and strongly inclin'd to *Company* and *Society*, which he apprehends so necessary for the *Help*, *Relief* and *Comfort* of his *Life*, Gen. 2. 18. *Eccl.* 4. 9, 10, 11, 12. But of all *Society*, that is the most inward and *intimate*, which has its rise from *Choice* and *Election*: In the making of which *Choice*, great *Caution* and *Consideration*, *Care* and *Prudence* is to be *exercis'd*; for Men are either *made*, or *mar'd*, as to the forming of their *Manners*; and further'd, or hindred, as to the *Improvement* of their *Time*, and their *Preparations* for *Eternity*, according to the *Company* they fall in with: And therefore we need *Direction* in no *Action* of our *Life* more than in the *Choice* of our *Company*, especially of our *Friends*, our closest and most familiar *Companions*. They are *excellent* *Counsels* that are given by *Pythagoras* and *Theognis*, to guide and conduct our *Choice*:

*Where Vertue dwells there Friendships make,  
But evil Neighbourhoods forsake,*

*Tully* tells us, that *Friendship* is given and intended by *Nature* to be an *Assistant*, *Helper* and *Advancer* of *Vertues*, and not a *Companion*, *Prompter* and *Promoter* of *Vices*: It therefore greatly concerns and becomes you, so to pick and chuse your *Friends* and *Acquaintance*, as may best serve some excellent *End* of *Vertue*.

And

And yet we find, when Persons are to chuse their most *bosom Friends*, the Companions of their Youth and Age, that they and their Relations, who are their Guides and Governours, do too commonly regard bodily *Beauty* and worldly *Portion*, more than *Piety* and *Religion*, and all the Riches and Ornaments of Grace, and helps for Salvation, and Advantages of living and growing in the Knowledge, and Faith, and Fear of God.

*Laelius* in *Cicero* relates of *Scipio*, that he was wont to complain, That Men were exceeding diligent in all other Provisions, would take what care could be expected in making choice of Goats and Sheep, and such like things; but were extremely negligent in chusing of their Friends, nor in this case made any use of requisite Signs and Notes, by which they might discern and judge what Persons were fit and well qualified to be received and taken into Friendship. And he there directs, that Men would prudently put some stop to the Stream of their Affection; and as we make Trial of other things, so that we would make some Experiment of the Manners of the Persons we design for our Companions, and accordingly embrace or decline Familiarity with them.

O be nice and choice of your Company and Society, delicate and curious in that Matter and Business. Consider beforehand (as *Seneca* advises.) whether they be worthy or no to have any part of your Life bestowed upon them, whether any share of your Time may fitly and warrantably be allowed them: for idle carnal Friends are the



*Thieves* that steal away our Time from us ; and 'tis a *costly* Entertainment of them, to waste our Time upon them. Vain and profane Friends and Acquaintance do rob us of the opportunity of doing and receiving good: They seek nothing but idle and empty Talk, they will not maintain serious and savoury Discourse: O ! what Loss have many of us sustain'd by such ill Customers as these ? Call to thy remembrance ( says Seneca ) *How many have cheated thee of thy Time, thou in the mean time not understanding what thou hast lost. Men give away part of their Years (saies he) to them they mightily love, nor do they perceive or know in the least what they do : And they give it so, that others receive no profit by that which they deprive themselves of : But they are ignorant that they themselves lose any thing by it, and therefore the Detriment that is so latent is tolerable to them.*

If we be wise; let's look well who they be that we spend and lay out our Time upon. Let's not sit, customarily *sit with vain Persons* : *Psal. 26. 4.* nor be the common Companions of Fools : *Prov. 13. 20.* but rather say, in our Hearts at least, with holy David, *Depart from me, all ye Workers of Iniquity : Psal. 6. 8. Depart from me ye evil Doers : for I will keep the Commandments of my God, Psal. 119. 115.*

Avoid Communion with the *Lepers* of the World. O never offer with *Nebuchadnezzar* to keep Company with *Beasts* : Do not so degrade, and debase your selves : Do not lose your Time, and lose your selves in such unprofitable, contemptible Society. Take here the Counsel of St.

*Jerome*

*Jerome, In this respect learn an holy Pride, scorn such mean and low, vile and base Company, and know your selves to be better than they: Be of more raised Spirits than to be Companions with them. By keeping ill Company, thou wilt lose thy Time, and lose or lessen thy spiritual Beauty: thou wilt, like him that walketh in the Sun, be quickly tann'd insensibly.*

Have no frequent *chosen* Converse, no inward close Friendship with those that are *none of God's real Friends*, that have no spiritual Acquaintance with God, but are manifestly profane, openly ungodly, and *alienated from the Life of God*: that are Enemies to God, and his Religion; his Son, and Spirit; his Word, and Worship; Laws, and Waies; and whose *Friendship is Enmity with God: Ja 4.4.* whose Friendship is Friendship with Hell, and who are themselves but a kind of *familiar Devils*: Never chuse to join in Company with these; to haunt the Places they use, which commonly give no small occasion of Sin; and to resort and repair to such Houses in agreed Meetings to sinful Ends and Bulinesses.

Chuse not those for *thy Friends*, who never yet began to be *true Friends to themselves*. He that is not a Friend to *himself*, will never be a Friend to *thee*. 'Tis only *he that is a Friend to himself* (saies *Seneca* wisely and discretely) *that is likely to prove a truly profitable Friend to others.*

Chuse not such for *thy Friends*, that are not likely to be *Friends to thy Soul*. How can he be reckon'd and reputed a *Friend to thee*, who is not a Friend, but rather an *Enemy to the better*.

*Part of thee?* Take this for a *Rule*, That if a Person be not a good Man, though he love thee, he is not a Friend to thee. A Master of Morality will tell thee, That *he that is a Friend, does love: but he that loves, is not for that reason presently a Friend: for Friendship does alwaies profit a Person; but Love doth hurt sometimes*: Now hurt to the Soul, is the greatest Hurt that can be done to any. And therefore acquaint not with those that will study to bring Vice into your Acquaintance, and whose Acquaintance will breed your Estrangement from God: Keep free from that Company that will make you part Company with God, and Christ, and a good Conscience: Cleave not unto those that will be Clogs and Pull backs, Deaders and Quench-cools to you; that will cool and damp your Heart and Spirit, in the Practice of Piety and Exercise of Religion, and make you hold your peace even from Good, *Psal. 39. 1. 2.* That will only love, and respect, and care for you, upon condition that you love not Christ, nor regard Holiness, nor care in the least for your immortal Soul, and eternal Happiness: That will by all means labour to bring you to esteem lightly of the *Lord's-Day*; and to give them your Time and Company, in an idle, fruitless, profane, ill-exemplary private Retirement, when you should be conscientiously and awfully present at the Publick Assembly.

Be sure you beware of such Company, as will only give a treat and entertainment to your Sense and Palate, load your Body with Meats and Drinks, pass the Time in Sport and Play

with you ; fill your Ears with unprofitable, atheistical, profane, loose and lewd Discourse ; vitiate your Mind, pervert your Judgment, debauch your Fancy, corrupt your Manners, help you to forget God and your selves, teach you to become *Beasts in Courtesy*, and by their foolish mad Mirth, and cruel Kindness to you abroad, make work enough for your earnest, serious Sorrow and Sadness, your dear and costly Repentance at home : But will make you neither wiser, nor better, add nothing to your Vertue, contribute nothing to your Graces, and to the Feeding and Nourishing of your Souls : Who will, it may be, feast and pamper your Body, but starve and pine, yea poison your Soul ; and by a pretended Civility and Courtesy to you, labour to be the Bane and Undoing of you : Who will either *vex*, or *taint* all that are near them : Who being *themselves infected* with the *Plague of Sin*, have a strange and strong desire to *infect others* : The only mode of whose Kindness is an *artificial Insinuation* of variety of Temptations, and an earnest importunate Solicitation to Evil : Who will endeavour to turn you off from a diligent holy Life ; and, if it be possible, will *laugh* or *mock* you out of Heaven : Who having *no Seed*, or *Spark* of Vertue in *themselves*, must needs *hate*, besiege and undermine it in *others*, as being a constant standing *Reproach* to themselves.

Abandon those Companions, that are *good Companions only in sinning* ; who will lead you to Atheism and Profaneness, provoke you to Lust and Wantonness, Anger and Rage, or draw you

you into Drunkenness ; urge and impose their *sickly Healths* upon you, and will not let you *live by Rule*, but will unweariedly tice and press you to Sin, and be sick with them ; sweetly perswade you into Inconvenience, fairly and finely allure you into fashionable Folly, and inviteable Milery ; court and complement you into eternal Ruin ; civilly bear you Company, and lovingly befriend you into Hell ; and so really shew less Kindness, and *worse Nature* to you, than *Dives* among the Devils in Hell express'd toward his Brethren here on Earth, who *contrived* and laboured to keep and preserve them from that Place of Torment, *Luke* 16. 27, 28. Make not them the Joy and Entertainment of thy Life, who, *by thy leave*, will be thy eternal Destruction and Death.

Have no Intimacy, hold no Familiarity with wicked Persons : you may go see and visit them as their *Physicians*, but not as their *Companions* : you may sometimes call upon them, to *cure* and heal them, to prescribe somewhat to them, to leave some good Directions with them : but you must not be so *often* with them, nor stay so *long* with them, till you get their *Disease*, and take *Infection* from them.

But now on the other side ; If we would spend our Time profitably and comfortably, and have it turn to any considerable good Account ; let's study to contract Friendship and Union with vertuous Persons : esteeming them the most valuable Friends, and ( to use *Tully's* Expression ) *the best and fairest furniture of Life*. Let's reckon *Vertue* and *Grace* to be the weight-  
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est reason of Amability ; the Worthiness and Excellency of Persons Dispositions and Manners to be the most solid stable Ground, the greatest Allective and strongest Attractive of Love and Dearness. Let's chuse with holy David to be *Companions of all them that fear God, and of them that keep his Precepts*, Ps. 119. 63. To be their Companions out of true *Affection*, not out of *Faction* : because they are Godly, not because they are Persons of such and such an *Opinion* and *Party* : To be Companions of them, and of *all them* : Let not any *difference in outward Quality*, nor in *Opinion* among the Godly, in things *remote* from the *Substance* of Religion, be a cause of sinful *Partiality*. David a great King, scorn'd not the Company of any such, nor was ashamed to be seen in their Company. As his was, so let *all our Delight be in the Saints, and the Excellent that are in the Earth*, Ps. 16. 3. Let's join with him, and say, *Let those that fear thee, turn unto me, and those that have known thy Testimonies*, Ps. 119. 79. Let's chuse to walk with *wise Men*, that we may be *wise*, Prov. 13. 20, to be frequently in Company with those, *whose Fruit*, (that is, *actively*, the Fruit which they bring forth, the Profit which they yield and afford to others, in their Communication and Conversation, by Information and Example) is a *Tree of Life* ; and who are *wise to win Souls*, Prov. 11. 30.

Be conversant with those (says Seneca excellently) *who are any way likely to make thee better : and receive those into thy Friendship and Acquain-*  
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tance, whom thou mayest probably some way or other make better. I say in like manner, let us sort and suit, associate and familiarize our selves with those among whom we may do most *spiritual* Good, or from whom we may reap and receive most *spiritual* Benefit.

Study and strive to chuse such an one for thy *Friend*, to whom thou mayest give such *reverential Respect* in thy Carriage and Behaviour, as may restrain thee from many uncomely sinful Actions, which you might take *more Liberty* to commit in *other Company*.

Take him for thy *special Friend* and peculiar Companion, who will be a constant Physician, careful Tutor, and spiritual Benefactor to thy Soul; who will be a familiar, tutelar, *guardian Angel* to thee: Who will be (a second Soul and Conscience) an *assistant Conscience* to thee; who will not fail to perform that Office, which the benumm'd or *sleepy Conscience within thee* shall at any time neglect. Who will be as faithful a *Monitor* to thee, as thy *own Conscience should be*: Who daily does so improve in Vertue, and Profit in Piety, that whenever he comes into thy Company, he will give thee the great Pleasure, not only of *seeing whom you would*, but of *seeing such an one as you would*: Who will be careful to *salute himself*, before he visits thee; and will surely *bring himself a great Gift to thee*: (as *Seneca* counsels his Friend *Lucilius* to order, compose, and carry himself toward him.)

Chuse such Persons for thy *intimate Friends*, who will be *Friends* and *Helps* in the *best things*.

things to thee ; Friends in the concernments of the Life to come ; that will prize and value, and on all occasions readily shew some real *Kindness to thy Soul* ; that will observe thy *Motions*, and help to guide and direct thy *Actions* ; that will have a constant watchful Eye upon thy Life and Manners, and not willingly suffer thee to miscarry to Eternity, for want of careful looking after. Acquaint and accompany with those, in the enjoyment of whom you may enjoy somewhat of *God himself* ; and whose sweet and gracious *Converse* will be a little *Image of Heaven* to you : Take these for your *Consorts* and *Associates* here, with whom you may desire and hope to keep joyful *Company* for ever hereafter. If we make any *Reckoning* of our *Time*, let us first make a *good Choice* of our *Friends*.

2. And then a *good Improvement* of our *Company* and *Society* with them. Be prudent and pious in the *Use*, as well as in the *Choice* of your *Friends*. Let not your *Friendship* be a meer nominal, formal, empty, juiceless thing.

Let your ordinary *Visits* to your *Friends* be out of *Conscience*, as well as out of *Courtesy* : out of a real *Design* to do some *Office* of *Love*, especially to their *Souls* ; and to bring some *spiritual Advantage* to them.

*Time* is commonly lost by meer *complemental Visits*, wherein no civil *Business* is dispatch'd, no *Service* done to the *Bodies*, *Estates*, or *Souls* of others.

Let *Christian Friends* take heed especially that they come not together of purpose to waste their



their Time in unseasonable, *immeasurable* Play and Sport; that they be not found notoriously guilty of spending commonly and customarily as many Hours in Play together, as if Gaming were, *not their Recreation* and Diversion, but their Trade and Profession, their *Calling* and Occupation. Can this be reckon'd a well redeeming the Time in evil Days? Would not some of that time be spent more *fruitfully* and *comfortably* in the Communication of your *Experiences*, and the *Observations* you have made relating either to God's Word or Works? or in reading together some select and seasonable *Scripture*, or else some part of practical *Divinity*, or good *Morality*, or useful *History*; and in discoursing and conferring thereupon, as you have Ability, and find Occasion?

Let not *Cards* and *Dice* swallow up and devour the most of the Hours you spend together: Nor ever suffer any Friends and Companions to rob you of your Time, by yielding to them, and complying with them, when they unreasonably exact of you to *hold out with them in their Sports*. If you perceive that any particular Game or Play does steal away your *Heart* and *Time*; 'tis high time then rather to lay it quite aside, than to suffer such Detriment by Continuation of the Use of it. When *Bp. Usher*, in his tender Years, was taught by some of his Friends to play at *Cards*, and found himself so delighted therewith, that it not only took place of the Love of his Book, but began to be a Rival with the spiritual Part in him, upon apprehension thereof (as *Dr. Bernard* informs us) he gave it over, and never played after. When

When Christian Acquaintance meet together, let them be as useful and profitable, as helpful and beneficial, as holy and heavenly in their Discourses may be : You may do more good by an *honest Hint*, and serious *favoury Speech* in Company, than it may be a *Minister* may do by *many Sermons*.

Labour to *spiritualize* and *ennoble* your Friendship, by making it a *State of Love and Purity*, and Opportunity and Advantage of amending and reforming, of benefiting and bettering one another.

Let such as live either with or by one another, by solemn *Compact* and *Agreement* strictly and strongly oblige one another to take some special spiritual *Care* of one another's *Souls* ; This would be real spiritual good Neighbourhood ; an high Advancement ; a rich and gainful Improvement of Friendship.

You that are *Intimates* and *Familiars*, look upon your selves as one another's *Keepers* : Gen. 4. 9. Take a *spiritual Charge* one of another : *Naturally care* for one another's *spiritual State* : Phil. 2. 20. *Watch over* one another's *Soul*, as they that must give account : an Account of one another, as well as of your selves : that you may do it with *Joy*, and not with *Grief* : Heb. 13. 17. Be *jealous* over one another with a *Godly Jealousy* ; 2 Cor. 11. 2. and shew your selves such *fast Friends* to one another's *Souls*, as todo your best to prevent one another's sinning, and to promote the *Work of Grace* and *Holiness* in one another's *Hearts*. Take *Occasion* to *warm* not so much one another's *Houses*, as one

one another's *Heart s.* Visit one another in the evening, meet together, and confer one with another at *leisure Hours*, and on daies of Recreation: *Speak often one to another*, concerning the things that *belong to the Peace* of one another's Soul, and concern the Condition of the Church of Christ. *Mal. 3. 16. Build up one another on your most holy Faith. Jude 20. Comfort your selves together, and edify one another. 1 Thes. 5. 11.*

*Exhort one another daily, while it is called, To day*; Let your Exhortation be mutual and reciprocal, frequent and continual, seasonable and speedy; *lest any of you be hardned through the Deceitfulness of Sin. Heb. 3. 13.* Take the first Opportunity of dealing with thy Friend, as the case and need of his Soul requires, lest death remove him unexpectedly out of the reach of thy Charity to all Eternity. Consider with thy self, that should thy Companion live longer, yet he may continue in the omission of some Duty, because you *only purpose* to put him upon it. Or, he may go on in the commission of some Sin, grow more and more in Love with it, and fall more under the Power of it, because you have only some thought and intention to turn him from it.

Support, preserve and keep one another from falling; and, *in the Spirit of Meekness*, raise and recover, restore and convert one another, when overtaken and fallen, in any degree and measure, either into Sin, or Errour, *Gal. 6. 1. Jam. 5. 19.* Hate not your Friend or Brother in your Heart: *in any wise rebuke your Neighbour, and never suffer Sin upon him*, when you find him offending against

gainst God, or Man. Lev. 19. 17. And if a Friend or Brother shall plainly trespass against thee, go and tell him his Fault between thee and him alone : Mat. 18. 15. and seeming to reproach him, by chiding and reprehending him in publick ; nor offering to back-bite him, by talking privately to others against him.

Teach and admonish one another, Col. 3. 16. Rom. 15. 14. and let it appear that you practise your own Precepts, and take your selves the Counsel you give to others : Follow Tertullian's excellent Advise ; strengthen your friendly Admonition and Exhortation with the Authority of your own Conversation, that your want of Deeds may not make you blush at your own Words : and let me add, that your Friend and Companion may not neglect and reject your Sayings, because he knows too well your Doings : As oftentimes you thrust away the good Light of a Candle, for the ill savour which the stinking Tallow yields. Let none have reason to retort, and say, Physician, heal thy self : Luke 4. 23. Thou which teachest another, teachest thou not thy self ? Rom. 2. 21. What Mr. Herbert speaks of Ministers may be fitly accommodated to the Exhortations and Admonitions of Christian Friends.

*Doctrine, and Life, Colours, and Light, in one  
When they combine and mingle, bring  
A strong Regard and Aw : but Speech alone  
Doth vanish like a flaring thing,  
And in the Ear, not Conscience, ring.*

*Consider one another to provoke unto Love, and to good*

*good Works* ; or, to sharpen or provoke [ in one another ] Charity and good or laudable Works, *Heb. 10.24.* You are apt to forget, and prone to neglect *your selves* : you have need enough of *one anothers* spiritual Care and Help : 'tis necessary that *others* should watch and observe, incite and assist you ; be at some trouble, and take some pains with you : your *own* and *others* Consideration and Provocation of you, is little enough to stir and move you: Ponder and weigh all Advantages that you can have one upon another, to excite and extimulate, to engage and quicken one another to the Exercise of Charity, and all Actions of Piety, whensoever you find any thing of fainting, or growing cold in one another

Search and enquire into one anothers spiritual Estates : mind and study the *Cases* and *Conditions* of one anothers Souls ; the *Causes* and *Cures* of one anothers spiritual Distempers. Be very solicitous for one anothers present and future Good : carefully consult the spiritual Prosperity, and eternal Welfare of one another.

Consider one another to provoke one another, not to Sin and Wickedness, to Vanity and Folly, to uncertain Opinions, to Faction and Division, to Siding and Party-taking ; not to that which is highly provoking, but exceeding well-pleasing to God ; not to *Wrath*, but to love, not to *Evil*, but to *Good Works*. Consider and provoke one another, not as the *Devil* considers and provokes Men by his Temptations ; but as God considers and provokes Men who watches  
over

over us continually, prevents us daily with his Grace, strengthens us against Temptations, affords us his Counsel, instils many good Motions into our Minds, and often incites and stirs us up to the Duties incumbent on us : And as *Christ* consider'd and provoked Sinners, when he was here on Earth, to Faith and Repentance, good Works and Obedience ; who *went about doing Good* ; doing good to Men's Souls, as well as Bodies : who freely convers'd with them, frequently instructed them, affectionately exhorted them, powerfully prels'd them, plainly reprov'd them, was grieved for the Hardness of their Hearts, lamented and wept over their Impenitency and Infidelity.

Consider thy Companion at such a *season*, when it is most likely that *he* may consider what you say to him : Provoke him *to Good*, when in all probability it may *do most good*.

Remember to consider and provoke one another in a *serious manner*. Never offer to utter a few cold, dull, dead Words, *between Jest and Earnest* ; but *earnestly* perswade, and *pathetically* expostulate one with another ; and let one another plainly see that every Application does arise and proceed from *Love and Compassion*, and that it is the Desire of your Souls to save one anothers Souls. Let your Words be as *Goads* (as the Wise Man speaks) *Eccl.* 12. 11. to prick one another forward in the way of Religion. Instead of *detaining* one another unnecessarily from the Publick Assembly, *stir up* one another with an holy Zeal, and say one to another in the Words of the Prophet

pher, *Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of Hosts : I will go also,* Zach. 8. 21. Be not *Quench-coals*, but as *live Coals*, begetting Heat in those that are next you. Let *Christian Acquaintance* use their utmost Endeavours to bring one another more acquainted with God, and with their own spiritual States and Conditions. Let *Christian Neighbours* study and endeavour to make one another *nigh* to God. Let *Christian Yoke-fellows* exhort and encourage one another to take *Christ's Yoke* upon them, and to bear his Burden. Let *Christian Servants* stir up one another to *work out their Salvation*, to do the Business, and to finish the Work which their heavenly Master has given them to do.

Consider, exhort, provoke one another, and look *what becomes* of all the Labour, Care and Pains that you take with any Friend or Acquaintance ; and if it obtain not at present its much desired Fruit and Effect, yet be not disheartened, nor *desert* your Duty, and give over this necessary Office, and excellent Part of Friendship, though you find it *difficult* and uneasie ; though you seem to any carnal Friend *as one that mocks*, (as Lot did to his Sons-in-Law, Gen. 19. 14.) In *Meekness instruct those that oppose themselves*, 2 Tim. 2. 25. *Reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering*, c. 4. v. 2. 1 Thes. 5. 14. which will be a *becoming Imitation of God*, who (you may remember) *endured you with much long-suffering* ; who did not leave you to your selves, when you first rejected his heavenly Admonition ; who called you often before

before you would hear, and often provoked you before you would stir: who suffers sinful Men so long, till at last he suffers for his Suffering: who is so patient, till at last he loses by his Patience: whose extream Patience (as Tertullian excellently observes) seems to detract and derogate from his Power: for many believe (says he) that there is no Governour of the World, because they do not see him angry with the World. Patiently continue thy Consideration and Care of thy Friends, for though they do not consider what you say at present, they may consider it hereafter. Consider them, because this will be a comfortable Consideration, that though you do no good upon them, yet you did your honest, faithful, and best Endeavours to do them good, and are therefore clear from their Blood.

Think how greatly you will gain in your own Experience, by considering your Acquaintance, and Dealing in a spiritual way with them; and how much you will heighten and strengthen your own good Affections, by exhorting, provoking, and exciting your Friends, by rubbing and chafing your Companions, you will not only get warmth into them, but will with the same labour make your selves a great deal hotter than you were before. The more you persuade and stir up them to the Love and Fear of God, the more your own Heart will be warmed and inflamed with the Love, and filled and possess'd with the Fear of God: The more you quicken and stir up them to good Works, you your selves will become much more ready to every good Work.

And



And as this will *increase* and improve your own spiritual *Gifts* and *Graces*, so it will *enlarge* your *Joys* and *Comforts*; and be matter of Satisfaction and Pleasure to you, to see some of their Souls spiritually prosper, whom you have taken a special care of. What a *comfort* will it be at last to consider, that you have *done much good* by considering your Associates; that by *your consideration of them* you have brought them to *consider God and themselves*; that, under God, you have been the happy Instruments of awakening, convincing, strengthening, and quickning your Acquaintance; of *gaining your Brethren*, Mat. 18. 5. of gaining them to God, and gaining and endearing them more and more to *your selves*; and of saving some precious Souls from Death, which are *more worth* than the *whole World*? How will they be your *Glory and Joy*, and *Crown of Rejoicing*, 1 Thes. 2. 19, 20. who shall confess and acknowledge that *you were the blessed means* of working upon them, and prevailing with them; that, *under God*, they owe their spiritual Light and Life, their Growth and Thriving in Grace, their Progress and Procedure in Faith and Holiness, their Stedfastness and Advancement in Religion and Godliness to *your care and pains with them*, your compassionate Consideration of them, and watchful Circumspection over them? yea, will not this increase the Joys of *Heaven*, and heighten the Pleasures of *Paradise* to you, to meet with those Acquaintance there, whom *you were a means* of helping thither, by prompting and encouraging them to do those

those Works which are the way to the heavenly Kingdom.

Consider moreover, that your *considering* your Friends and Neighbours will be *considered* and accepted by God, though they should *never consider* any thing at all: that your *Labour of Love* will not be *in vain to your selves*, though it should be ineffectual to others: But if *by dealing with them*, you do some real considerable good upon them; that then very great will be your *Reward in Heaven*: that if you *turn many to Righteousness*, you shall shine as the Stars for ever and ever, Dan. 12. 3. That if, from a Principle of the *Fear of the Lord*, you *speak often one to another*, to animate one another to Faith and Obedience, to Courage and Constancy; the Lord will *hearken and bear it*, and a *Book of Remembrance* shall be written before him concerning it: and you shall be his in that Day, when he *maketh up his Jewels*, [his peculiar Lot, Inheritance, choice Portion, chief Treasure,] and he will spare you as a Man spareth his own Son that serveth him, Mal. 3. 16, 17. If you consider one another for good, God will consider you for good: If you provoke one another to Love, this will provoke God to reward you as well as them, for all the good Works that are done by them, by means of your Exhortations and Examples. But if you provoke not them to do good Works, you shall one Day be found guilty of all the evil Works done by them, which you might have hindred by any means, and any way prevented the Commission of.

Neglect not the serious Exhortation, loving

X

Consideration;

Consideration, and zealous Provocation one of another ; for surely when you come to *die*, your own Hearts will not condemn you for *labouring too hard* in the grand concerns of the Souls of your Friends, *who are as your own Souls*, Deut. 13. 6. But you will be ready to challenge your selves for want of Care and Diligence in that Performance, and to grieve and mourn that you have been so *useless in your Friendship* and Society ; that you have no better improved Christian Fellowship and Communion ; no more awaken'd, quicken'd, comforted, and spiritually served one another.

Grudge not to bestow a *little Labor* in watching over thy Friend and Neighbour ; this Work and Task will be *quickly over*.

And take not amiss *another's* taking care of thee. Count the *Christian Religion* lovely and amiable, upon this Consideration, that it makes *such* excellent and admirable Provision for the Welfare and Safety of Souls, for the spiritual Security and eternal Felicity of the Professors of it. Prize and value the rich Mercy, and abundant Kindness of God to thee, that he should appoint *every Friend* about thee to be a *spiritual Help* to thee ; and make it part of his Office and Business to *take care of thy Soul*. And when you find *any Friend faithful* in the Exercise of his Duty, and Discharge of his Conscience toward thee, *bless God* that he is so ; and be truly *thankful to him* also, for so high an expression of his charitable Affection : Let his sincere and hearty Love to thee make him appear *good in thy sight as an Angel of God*, 1 Sam. 29. 9. and

and cause his Feet, as well as Face, to be truly beautiful to thee, *Rom. 10. 15.* Never be provoked with an ill Provocation against the Person of a Friend, who sharpens and provokes you with a good Provocation. Be not angry with any that that provoke you to Love; nor render evil for good to such as labour to provoke you to good Works. If thy Friend and Companion rebuke thee, know how to accept a great Kindness; take his Love and Good-will vvell, and shevv that thou hast good Flesh to heal. Say vvith holy David, *Psal. 141. 5.* Let the Righteous smite me, it shall be a Kindness; and let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent Oil which shall not break my Head. And reckon this to be one of the saddest Strokes that God inflicts, for God to say, Let no Man strive, nor reprove another, *Hos. 4. 4.* Be so vvise, and good natur'd, as to suffer a Word of Exhortation and Admonition from a truly loving Christian Friend. When thou art in Company vvith thy Friends, do as Benhadad's Servants did in the Presence of Ahab: *1 Kings 20. 33.* diligently observe vvwhether any good thing vvill come from any, and hastily catch it. Shevv thy self much pleased and delighted vvith any good Discourse that is started, and labour to keep it up and maintain it.

But knowv, that if novv thou refuseth to hearken to the Counsels, and followv the Ad- vices, and submit thy self to the Reproofs and Reprehensions of prudent, pious, Christian Friends: *Eph. 5. 21.* and art ready to strive against all their earnest passionate Strivings.

vwith thee ; then they that contended and laboured in vain with thee here, shall surely judg thee at the Last Day, 1 Cor. 6. 2. and bring in Evidence and Testimony against thee, that they would have healed thee, and thou wouldst not be healed ; Jer. 51. 9, that they, by all means, would have helped thee to Heaven, and thou wouldst hasten and hurry to Hell.

*The eleventh Direction.*

If we would earnestly redeem the Time, we must remember and consider, perform and answer our solemn Sacramental Vows, Occasional Promises, and Sick-bed Resolutions,

I. Our solemn Sacramental Vows.

(1.) Our Promise and Vow made in Baptism. Which Promise made by Persons baptized when adult, or of full Age, is called (as some understand and interpret that Place) the stipulation or answer of a good Conscience towards God. 1 Pet. 3. 21.

At the time of our Infant-Baptism, we were dedicated to the Service of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and solemnly entered into a sacred Covenant. Then we indented and engaged to renounce the Devil, the Ruler. Prince, and God of this World ; Eph. 6. 12. and 2. 2. John 12. 31. 2 Cor. 4. 4. And all his Works : All that the Devil labours by any means to set us about and employ us in : But especially and principally all those Sins, which carry particular the stamp and character, the image and resemblance of Satan upon them, and have from  
the

the beginning been practised by him ; *John 8. 44.* such as Pride, Lying, Slandering, Malice, Envy, Killing and Destroying, Tempting and Soliciting others to Sin : We covenanted expressly to abandon and abominate all *Diabolical Works* ; And to forsake and disclaim the *Pomps and Vanities*, or Pompous Vanities ; the profane *Spectacles*, the Luxury, the ostentations, vain-glorious Bravery of this *wicked World* : To abhor and avoid the evil Company, and to resist the applauded, vile, vicious Customs, and popular Temptations of the World : To take care not to accompany the Ungodly in their Sins : To deny *Ungodliness and worldly Lusts* ; and all the sinful Desires, Affections, Appetites of the *Flesh* : to abstain from *fleshly Lusts*, and from all the *Works of the Flesh* : to make no provision for the Flesh, to fulfil the Lusts thereof : To endeavour to moderate and subordinate all our Desires to the Will of God : And by God's Grace, and *under the influence of Divine Assistance*, according to our Abilities, *obediently to keep God's holy Will and Commandments* ; and not only to take a few Steps, but to *walk in the same* ? and that not only for a *space*, or a few daies but *all the daies* of our Lives.

And since we came to years of Discretion, and were of age sufficient to use our Reason, and act understandingly ; we have personally owned, openly and deliberately confirmed our *Baptismal Vow*, taken the obligation *in our own names* ; by actual consent yielded and resigned, devoted and delivered up our selves to become the teachable tractable Disciples, the

ready and voluntary Servants of the blessed Trinity : Now to make this *grand Promise* good, were to redeem the Time indeed. Let's never offer, or dare to live, as if we had been initiated in the impure Mysteries of the *Heathen* ; as if we had been baptized in the very name of *Bacchus*, or *Venus* ; baptized in the very *Devil's* name, devoted to his Drudgery, and deeply engaged against God, and Christ, and the Holy Spirit ; against the Gospel and Godliness ! against the Members of Christ, and the People of God : But look and see we live as those, who did so early and solemnly dedicate our selves, Souls, Bodies, and Interests to God ; and vow to give our Time and Opportunities to his Service. We are in *Justice* obliged to keep this *Promise*, to pay this *Vow* ; which if we fail to do, we are miserably perjured and *forsworn*.

(2.) And then for the other Sacrament, that of the *Lord's Supper* ; In our preparations for receiving of it, we have, it may be, searched and tried, proved and examined our selves : inquired into our hearts and waies ; taken special notice of many Passages of our mislived Lives, and mispent Time ; seriously considered our many partial *Covenant-breaches* ; renew'd and repeated our *baptismal-contract* with God, and our Lord Jesus Christ ; determined to mortify those hateful Sins which crucified our Saviour ; settled our purposes of returning to our Duty with greater care and diligence than ever ; strengthened and reinforced our Covenant of reforming our Lives, and redeeming our Time ;  
and

and resolved upon a stricter Observance of Gods Laws for the rest of our daies : And at every time of our participation of the holy Communion, we openly offer'd and publickly presented our selves, our Souls and Bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively Sacrifice unto God : O let's remember, and stand to our Word ; and take care, in God's Fear, through Christ strengthening us, to perform the Covenant we have so often ratified, and frequently reiterated.

2. And then again ; When God hath roused and startled us by some awakening Ordinance of Providence : When some Son of Thunder, Mark. 3. 17. has plainly preach'd as if Death were at our backs (which was the Character King James once gave of a lively Minister that preached before himself) Or when some affectionate zealous Ambassadour of Christ, coming to us in the Spirit of St. Paul, has so convincingly reason'd of the Judgment to come, and brought his Discourse so close and home to our very Consciences, as to cause us to tremble again with Felix; we then came to sudden Resolutions, and speedy Purposes of Emendation of our Waies.

Or, when at any time God has cast us upon Beds of Sickness, brought us to the very brink of Death, the very Mouth of the Grave: when Friends and Physicians have been doubtful of our Lives; when all our own Hopes of Life sickned and died ; when our Souls have almost sat upon our Lips ; O then what fair and large Promises, and specious goodly Resolutions have we made, if God should ever restore us, lend



longer Life to us, and *try* and *trust* us once again, to become new Men, to turn over a new Leaf, to lead a new Life, to improve our Time to all possible Advantage, to do God more Service in a *Day*, than we did him in a *Month* before ?

Have we not been sometimes *so sick*, that we verily concluded we were really *seized* by the *Arrest of Death*, and seemed to hear God saying to us in particular, *Give an account of thy Stewardship : for thou maiest be no longer Steward : Luk 16. 2.* and thought of nothing but the tolling of the *Bell*, and expected (some of us) that the several parts of us within a few daies, or hours, should be shared and *divided* between the *Grave* and *Hell* ? Then we experienced in our selves *Philosophantes metus, & aegre fortuna sana consilia* : (to use the elegant expression of the most ingenious *Moralist*) Then our Fears read *Lectures of Philosophy*, [*Lectures of Divinity*] to us ; and the sad and sorrowful circumstances of a sick, and declining, and dangerous condition, did minister *salutary Counsels* and healthful Advices to us. Let's recollect and remember, what were our serious secret Thoughts, the inward workings of our Hearts, the lively stirrings of our Consciences ; yea our open Confessions, free Professions, and large Promises and Protestations at *such a time as that*.

Men are too commonly of a Temper much like that of *Nevolus* in *Martial*, of whom we find there this Character, that when he was *secure* and prosperous, none was more *arrogant* and *insolent* ; but when he was *solicitous*, and  
prels'd

press'd with care, none was more modest and humble, and of better condition and carriage than he.

We generally appear sensible and serious, ready to reform, and forward to enter into Vows and Engagements, in Affliction and Adversity, in grievous Calamities and deep Distresses; and to do this especially, when confin'd to our Chambers by malignant Distempers, violent or painful Diseases; and forced by Sickneis to take, and to keep our Beds.

Plinius Secundus writing to his Friend Maximus, acquaints him with this observation of his; *The late languishing Condition of a Friend of mine taught me thus much, saies he, that we are usually best when we are sick and weak: for what infirm sick Person is amorous or lascivious, ambitious of Honour, or covetous of Riches? How little soever such a Person possesses, he reckons he has enough, because he supposes he must shortly relinquish what ever he has. Then a Man remembers that there is a God, saies he, and that he himself is but a Man: Then he envies, admires, despises no body: then he does not hearken to, nor feed upon uncharitable Discourses: nor is he malicious, or injurious to any: but only designs, if he should continue longer in the World, to lead an innocent and a happy Life. And he ends that notable Epistle with this very wise and wholesome Counsel; What Philosophers endeavour to deliver in many Words and Volumes; that I may thus briefly hint, by way of Instruction, to thee, and to my self, saies he; That we continue to be such when we are well, as we promise we will be when*

*we are sick.* When *Sigismund* the Emperor enquired of the *Bishop* of *Colen* what he should do to be happy eternally ; he only advised him to take care to *live*, as he promised to do the last time he had the *Gout* or *Stone*.

O let's but pay our *Sick-bed Vows*, and we shall redeem the Time indeed. Let's be the same when our *Actions* are seen, as when our *Words* are heard. Let's never offer, when we recover our Health and Strength, to resume our old-acquaintance *Sins*, or to turn again to *Folly*, *Psal.* 85. 8.

Did we but answer our sacred *Vows*, and solemn *Promises*, we should no longer be expensive and wasteful of our precious *Hours* : We should not be *alwaies* beginning to live, but should live indeed and in good earnest : We should in time make so sure of a blessed *Eternity*, that we should never more have cause to fear either *Sickness*, *Death*, the *Grave*, or *Hell*.

#### *The twelfth and last Direction.*

If we would effectually redeem the Time, we must not give way to any *Delay*, but strengthen and settle our *Resolution* against any farther *Procrastination*.

Know the Time of thy *Visitation* : *Luke* 19. 44. Know in this thy *Day* the things which belong unto thy *Peace*, ver. 42. Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near. *Isa.* 55. 6. Acquaint now thy self with God. *Job* 22. 21. Agree with thine *Adversary* quickly, whilst thou art in the Way with him, *Mat.* 5. 25. Flee from the

the Wrath to come : chap. 3. 7. Not go, nor run, but flee. Flee for Refuge to lay hold upon the Hope set before you : Heb. 6. 18. as of old, the unwitting, and unwilling Man-slayer was wont to hasten to take hold upon the Horns of the Altar, and to flee for safety to a Sanctuary, or City of Refuge, when hotly pursued by the enraged Avenger of Blood, *Exod* 21. 13. *Num.* 35. 6. *Deut.* 4. 41. Be able to say with holy David, *Pf.* 119. 60. *I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy Commandments.*

Where the Prophet expresses it both affirmatively and negatively, and so the more Emphatically, after the manner of the Hebrews, to shew his promptitude and readiness, speediness and quickness ; in comparison of those dull and lazy Procrastinators, who come not at all, or come but softly and slowly to God. And though the Words speak of the *time past*, yet (as Calvin observes) they note a continual act : *I made haste and delayed not ; and I still make haste, and now do not delay to keep thy Commandments.* Remember, how *Abraham* rose up early in the Morning, and without objecting, or disputing, or letting slip the first opportunity, was ready to offer, and forward to Sacrifice his only Son, at Gods command, *Gen.* 22. 3. And how Christs Disciples, at his first Call, immediately left their Nets, the Ship and their Father, and followed him, *Matth.* 4. 20, 22. And take Example by the wise Merchant in the Parable, who dispatch'd his necessary business immediately, without cunctation or delay : The account there given of him is express'd all

in the present Tense : He goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth the Field in which the Treasure was hid. While you have opportunity, do good to your selves, and do good to all, Gal. 6. 10. Let me say to you concerning Time and Opportunity, as Boaz said to his Kinsman concerning the Land, Ruth 4.4. If you will redeem it, redeem it : Stand no longer dallying and trifling in a matter that requires haste and speed. For here consider,

1. *The sooner, the better.* 'Tis better,

(1.) In respect of God.

(2.) Of our selves.

(1.) The sooner we redeem the Time, the better it is in respect of God : for God is abundantly more honoured, and better serv'd by it.

He is more honoured by it. Our making haste to redeem the Time, prevents the doing of much Dishonour, which by great and gross mispence of our Time would many ways be cast upon God ; by our affronting his Authority, continuing in open Rebellion against him, breaking his holy and righteous Laws, abusing his Creatures, and misemploying his Gifts from day to day. And more than so, It actually and positively does much honour to him, as it is a ready, present, obedient, Answer to God's Call, who cries, To day ; while it is called to day, Heb. 3. 7, 13. And a real demonstration, and high expression of our ardent Love, and hearty Affection to him, and his Laws, and Ways : and an open

open and constant *Justification* of their *Equity*, *Bonity*, *Suavity*, and *Amability*, in the eye of the World. And it is no small Honour done to God, that by making haste, and not delaying, we devote the *best* of our Time to him, and put him not off with the very dregs and refuse.

And further yet ; as God is *more honoured*, so he is much *better served* by it. The more haste we make to redeem the Time, we shall be the *better disposed*, more adapted and fitted for the Service of God ; become more *meet Vessels* for our Master's Use : and not only acquire greater *Abilities*, but meet with larger, more frequent and various *Opportunities* of doing God faithful and acceptable Service. The sooner we enter in, the longer we shall labour in our Lord's Vineyard, and do the more work for our heavenly Master.

(2.) The sooner we redeem the Time, *the better it is in respect of our selves*. 'Tis more *honourable*, more *pleasurable*, more *profitable* to do it sooner than latter.

1. It is *more honourable* to hasten, and not to delay : for this is a Sign that our Acts and Deeds are *free and voluntary*, not forced and constrained : That what we do in Religion, we do of *good will and choice*. On a Sick or Death-bed, a Man is *scared* into a sudden and *unchofen* Piety, and *frighted* into *fits of involuntary* Devotion. He that never sets himself to redeem his Time, till a mighty *Fear* forcibly drives and impells him to it ; till he finds he approaches and draws near to the Gates of *Death* and *Hell*,  
and

and is ready to give up his unwearied and unallowable Accounts to the great and righteous Judge; *This Man* acts dishonourably, for he does nothing out of *disaffection* to his Sins; nothing at all for the *Love of God*, and for the *sake of Vertue*. But it is an *Honour* and a *Credit* to a Christian, to redeem the Time by his *own Election*, and to act for God out of a *free and ingenuous Principle of Love*.

2. The more haste we make to redeem the Time, it is so much the *more pleasurable* to us: For, if we take up Christ's Burden betimes, we shall account it a light Burden: *We* will alleviate it to us. If we enter *early* into God's Service, we shall more *easily* reckon his Service *perfect Freedom*. The *sooner* we turn our Feet unto God's Testimonies, we shall run the way of them with more Freedom. The *sooner* we address and apply our selves to the keeping of Gods Commandments, we shall bring our selves with so much *less pains* to keep them, and shall taste *more Sweetness* in our Observance of them: We shall not meet with such *Difficulties* when we set upon the Work, nor have so great and vast *Prejudices* against Gods Laws and Ways to remove; such strong *Biaises* to sinful Courses to knock off, such grown and radicated *sinful Habits* to root out: We shall enter into the Way of Gods Commandments, and fall upon the Practice of Piety with less reluctance and contrariety; and the longer we have walked in the holy Path, the better we shall like it: the longer we have kept the Divine Precepts, the more we shall experience the *Goodness*, and find

And and feel the *Comfort* of them : and so still be more and more *pleased* and *satisfied* with them, and *delighted* in them.

3. The more *haste* we make to *redeem* the *Time*, it will prove the more *profitable* and *beneficial* to us : We shall get the more *Grace*, the more *Peace* here ; and a *greater Reward* of *Glory* hereafter.

The more we shall get of *Gods Grace*. *Grace* is encreased by *degrees* : and this is the *Method* of the *Divine Willdom*, for *God* ordinarily to give out his *Grace* as a *help* and *encouragement* to *usefulness* and *Diligence* ; a *Reward* and *Remuneration* of it. *God* does not use to communicate his *Grace* to *drowsy*, *sleepy*, *idle*, *lazy* *Loungers* ; but to impart it to *waking* and *stirring*, *active* and *busie Persons* : *Habenti dabitur*. *Unto every one that hath*, and *industriously useth* what he hath, in a *faithful* improvement of his *Time*, and *trading* with his *Talents* ; to him shall be given, and he shall have *abundance*, *Mat. 25. 29.* The more *work* we do, the more *strength* and *Grace* we shall receive ; and therefore let's early be up, and quickly be doing.

Again ; The sooner we do *redeem* our *Time*, the more *peace* we shall have, as well as the more *Grace*. An *early* *painful*, a *constant* *laborious* *Christian* must needs be ordinarily a *comfortable* *Christian*. Some *degree* of *comfort* attends and follows every good *Action*, as *Heat* accompanies *Fire*, and as *Beams* and *Influences* issue from the *Sun* : and many *degrees* of *comfort* will certainly usually accompany many good *Actions*. The more we hasten to *redeem* our *Time* as  
we



we ought, we shall the sooner attain to a *high degree of Probability*, and a *comfortable Assurance* of our Justification and Right to Salvation. But as long as we wilfully waste our Time, and mis-pend our Hours, so long we shall be troubled with disquieting *Doubts*, and perplexing *Fears*. *There is no Peace, saith my God, to the Wicked*, says the Prophet, *Isa. 57. 21.* but *great Peace have they which love thy Law*, says *David*, *Pf. 119. 165.* which love it so well, as to make very great haste to keep it.

Once more; As the sooner we redeem our Time and Opportunities; the more Grace and Peace we shall get here; so we shall receive a *greater Reward of Glory* hereafter. God will remunerate us according to our Works: The more we have done for him, the more we shall receive from him. The more acts of Obedience we have performed, we shall be recompensed with the higher Degree of heavenly Glory. The sooner you do it, so much the better. That's the first.

Consider,

(2.) We must make haste, and not delay to redeem the Time, because they that make *most haste* to redeem it, do find they have *work enough* to fill up all their Time, and take up all their Days and Hours. The Well-doing the business of Religion will fully employ us all our life long. 'Tis a strange thing, for any to think that the work of a Day, of an Hour, of an Instant, which *Wisdom's Children*, the most understanding People of God, think a *whole Life*

*little*

little enough for. Do you dream of believing in an *Instant*, of repenting in an *Instant*? Repentance has *many Acts* and Exercises belonging to it. To remove and expel long contracted habits of Sin, to arrive to a confirmed settled state of Goodness, to give an Example of Christian Graces in all Relations and Conditions of Life; certainly these are things that require a large and very considerable *tract of Time*, and cannot be crowded into a *narrow Room*.

If we do but consider, that they that have entered the most early into the Service of God, and have done many Years work for God, do acknowledge themselves, even after the pains and industry of *thirty or forty years Piety* to be but very *imperfect* Christians: If the most devout, religious Persons, after their using so much Diligence, do find at last so much *Induration* and *Unholiness* in themselves; many *bad reliques* of Selfishness, Worldliness, Pride and Passion; many *initial excesses* in Meats and Drinks; much *Coldness* and *Deadness* in holy Duties, much *Slackness* and *Remissness* in the ways of Godliness; some *strong Temptations*, which sometimes shake them, and are ready to foil and over-bear them; some *Weaknesses* and *Untowardnesses*, which they can never free themselves *wholly* from: If we well and seriously consider this, we shall be forced to confess, that the Redemption of Time, and Business of Religion, is not to be delayed and put off to be a *late*, much less the *last* Work to be done by a Christian.

(3.) We must make haste, and not delay to redeem the Time ; for

Delays are { *Unworthy and disingenuous.*  
*Hazardous and dangerous.*  
*Foolish and unreasonable.*

1. Unworthy { 1. In respect of God.  
 2. In respect of our selves.

1. *Unworthy in respect of God.* Every Delay of the Redemption of our Time for Gods Service, it argues our want of *Respect*, our lack of *Affection* and *Love to God* : It shews we prefer *our Sins before him*. What an *unworthy thing* is it, that we should *put God off*, who should be served in the *first place* by us, if we had *Christianity* or *Reason* ? That we should ever expect to receive the *Reward of Eternal Life*, and unconceivable Happiness from him, and yet *grudge* to Devote the few Days of this *temporal* *Life* to him ? That we should refuse to give our good Days to God, and strongly presume that God at last will be contented, well-pleased and satisfied with the weak, and faint, and *sickly Service* of those *evil Days*, which we our selves shall say we have no pleasure in ? Eccl. 12. 1. What a *disingenuous thing* is it, not to go to God till we cannot tell whither to go ? Just as Men go into an *Hospital*, when they apprehend they are quite useless, and find themselves utterly disabled to do any Work, and wholly unfit for Labour and Service ?

What *baseness* is it to deal worse with God, than fair

fair condition'd and ingenuous Men deal one with another ? Say not unto thy Neighbour, says Solomon; Prov. 3. 28. Say not unto God, lay I, Go, and come again, and to morrow I will give ; when thou hast it by thee. Thou hast thy endeavours, and thy Heart and Affections more by thee, now than thou art likely to have hereafter : and therefore do not causlessly and triflingly put God off. The Wages of an hired Servant, were not to abide with an Israelitish Master all Night until the Morning. Lev. 19. 13. Nor may we defer the Payment of the Debt which we all ow to our great Landlord, when it is at present justly demanded, and he cannot in honour remit, or forbear it. Shall we unworthily and wickedly oppose our Wills to the Wisdom and Will of God, who best understands what is the fittest Time, and has Right to appoint, and Authority to determine the Time of our Work, as well as the Work it self. When God so plainly saies, To day ; Is it meet for us to say, To morrow ? Shall we continue to delay, when we promise so often to break off our Delaies ? Shall we make God wait, who so pathetically calls, and cries, O that there were such an Heart in them ! Deut. 3. 29. When shall it once be ? Jer. 13. 27. Tis unworthy to deal worse with God than we would deal with Men.

But how highly unworthy is it to deal worse with God, than we have dealt with Sin, and with the Devil himself ? To come on in the Service of God as slowly as a Snail, when we used to turn to our sinful courses as eagerly and violently as the Horse rusheth into the Battle ?

Jer.

Jer. 8. 6. To deny God continually what he requires, and reasonably expects; when we have so frequently satisfied and fulfilled the Desires of the *Flesh*, and not *once* said *Nay* to the *Devil's* Temptations? To linger, and delay to keep *God's Commandments*, who have made the greatest haste and speed, and never in the least delayed to do the *Lusts* and *Works* of the *Devil*?

Once more; What *shameful Unworthiness* is it, to deal *worse* with *God*, than *God himself* deals with *us*? When we stand in need of *God*, *God* makes no unnecessary Delay. *Christ* is represented as *coming leaping upon the Mountains, and skipping upon the Hills*, Cant. 2. 8. When the Time of Deliverance is come, *Christ* makes haste, and rejoiceth to save: and no *Mountains* nor *Hills*, either of *Sin* or *Misery* can stop him: And shall we secretly justify, maintain and plead for our *Delaies*, by objecting the many *Mountains* of *Difficulties* that stand in the waies of *Christ's* Commands? When at any time we want any thing, it does not content and satisfy us that *God at last* will give us the *Mercy*, but we are *impatient* till he does it: We are ready to cry with *David*, Psal. 40. 13, 17. *O Lord, make haste to help me: make no tarrying, O my God.* We would be loth to be *serv'd so* by *God*, as we do usually *serve* *God*. When *God* himself has no delight to *put us off*, what *unworthiness* is it for any of us to find in our *Hearts* to *put God off*.

*God* makes indeed many great and very long *Delaies*, with relation to the Execution of his

his *Judgments* : But here it is *highly disingenuous* for us to *delay*, because God *delaies*. Is it not an indication of an *ill Nature*, a plain discovery of a *bad Temper*, for any to *defer* their *Repentance*, because God *defers* their *Punishment* ? and by prolonging and lengthning out our *Disobedience*, to make God *suffer from us*, because we *do not suffer from him* ? What *wretched baseness* is it to take *liberty* and *encouragement* to continue still in an evil way, and run on *presumptuously* in a course of Sin, because God is *merciful* patient and *long-suffering*, and *Sentence against an evil Work is not executed speedily* ? Eccl. 8. 11. when as the *Goodness* and *Patience* of God should *lead* and *oblige* us to *speedy Repentance* ; And nothing in the World can possibly appear more *unbecoming*, and a more *ungrateful return* to the *Kindness* of Heaven, than to be *bold* to be *evil*, because God is *good*. What can be more *contrary* to all *Ingenuity*, than to say in your *Hearts*, and to signify in your *Lives*, ( though you will not for *shame* speak out such a thing ) that you earnestly desire to have some further *Time* afforded you to live in Sin, and offend God, yet a while longer, by abusing his *Mercies* and disobeying his *Commands* ; and when all is done, to receive at last a *general Pardon*, upon a *short* and *slight* *Repentance* and *Confession* ; and without the *Trouble* of a *holy Life*, or taking any pains in working out your *Salvation*, to be *freely* and fully made *Partakers* of the *Riches* and *Treasures* of *Mercy* and *Glory* ?

Shall we shew our selves so monstrously *disingenuous*,

ous, as to delay to repent and obey ; when in the case of his Judgments, God is so gracious as to delay: But in the case of his Mercies he is so kind as not to delay to give what he sees were are fit to receive ?

2. Delaies are unworthy in respect of our selves. For,

(1.) The very *Act of deferring* plainly discovers a *false*, rotten, corrupt, untound and *insincere Heart*. Some are so *weak* as to think there is somewhat of *Goodness* in them, because they resolve to redeem the Time, by becoming penitent and obedient *hereafter*. But I think it is a *Sign* of great *Baseness*. A Man that *purposes* to keep God's *Commandments hereafter*, and *delaies* to keep and observe them *at present* ; the plain truth of it is, he has *no real honest good Mind* to keep them at all. He is just like a *cheating Debter*, that puts off the Payment from day to day, with *good Words* and *fair Promises* ; not because he *really designs* to discharge the Debt at the Time appointed ; but because he *never intends* to pay it, if he can possibly *shift and avoid* it. That which makes you *now* desirous to defer the Redemption of your Time, will make you loth to redeem it *hereafter*, as well as now.

(2.) To delay the Redemption of our Time, is very unworthy in respect of our selves, because it *infers* the *misimprovement* and *misemployment* of our *rational Faculties*, and the great *Abuse* of our *bodily Members* during our Delaies. When every one of us have *Souls capable* of doing God and our Generation good Service, what an *unworthy thing* it is either not to em-  
ploy

ploy, or to misemploy the noble Powers of our reasonable Souls, which are alwaies fit for higher Services, and better Uses, than the dila-  
tory Sinner puts them to. Does it not too plain-  
ly speak a mean and low and base Spirit, to  
chuse to continue a Slave to Sin, a Drudg and  
Bondman to the Devil; when thou might'st be  
busied and set a-work in God's Service, and very  
honourably and gainfully employed by the great and  
mighty Monarch of the World? To yield your  
Members as Instruments of Unrighteousness  
unto Sin, instead of yielding your selves to God,  
and your Members as Instruments of Righte-  
ousness unto God?

2. To delay the Redemption of our Time, is  
hazardous and dangerous, as well as unworthy and  
disingenuous. For.

(1.) The Time of our Life is very uncertain. Se-  
riously consider, that if thou dost not take the  
present Time, Time with thee may quickly be  
no more. He that is long forborn, is often snatched  
away of a sudden, Thou maiest go down to the  
Grave in a Moment, Job 21. 13. Thou maiest  
be dead, and buried; thy Body be rotten in the  
Grave, and thy Soul grievously tormented in  
Hell, long before the time comes which thou didst  
fix and set for thy Repentance, and the amend-  
ment of thy Life, Delay, saies Seneca, is the  
greatest Loss of humane Life: It deprives us of  
that which is present, while it Promises that  
which is future. The greatest hindrance of  
living well, saies he, is, Hope of living to morrow.  
But it is a noted Saying of St. Gregory, He that  
hath promised Pardon to him that repents, he has  
not promised to morrow to repent in. And if God  
has



has not promised it to us, we have no reason to promise it to our selves : for, 'tis a Rule in Civil Law, *No Person can promise that which is anothers.* He spake prudently and piously, who when he was invited to come to *morrow* to a Feast, returned this Answer, *I have not had a morrow for these many Years.* It was good Counsel which a wise Rabbi gave his Scholar, that he should *be sure to repent one day before he died.* But if you delay to be penitent and pious, holy and religious, the present Day ; you may never have the Benefit and Advantage of another.

*Young Men* too commonly lavish out the present, in hope of redeeming the future Time: But they build their Hope upon the greatest Uncertainty in the World. *Young Men* (as Tully brings in Cato discoursing) in some respects, are in greater danger of Death than *Old Men*: They fall into Diseases more easily, sicken more violently, and are cured more hardly: and therefore there are but very few that reach to an Old Age. The Jews tell of Ben Syra yet a Child, (as Dr. Stoughton relates the Story) that he begged of his Master to instruct him in the Law of God, who defer'd it, and put him off ; saying, he was too young yet to be entred into Divine Mysteries: then he replied, But Master, said he, I have been in the Church-yard, and perceive by the Graves which I have lain down by, and measured, and find shorter than my self, that many have died younger than I am, and what shall I do then ? And if I should die before I have learned the Law of God, what would become of me then, Master ?

The

The consideration of our short Life, says that worthy Doctor, should cause us to make haste to learn to know, and serve God; and to think we cannot begin to study that Lesson too soon, that can never be learned too well. And withal, to use all Speed and Diligence, lest, as Children have usually torn their Books, so, we have ended our Lives, before we have learned our Lessons.

Work while it is Day: the Night cometh, when no Man can work, Joh. 9. 4. Yet a little while is the Light [of this Life] with you: walk while ye have the Light, lest Darknes come upon you, c. 12. v. 35. Do not carry your selves like idle Boys, who play away their Canale, and then are forced to go to Bed in the dark.

Thy Life is uncertain; and therefore, with Apelles, that curious Painter, let no Day go without some stroke, or Line drawn to the Life: Let no day pass without dispatching some lawful Business, without performing some good Work, and doing some laudable vertuous Action. Do every Day the Work of that Day: Make Religion thy business every day of thy Life.

(2.) Delays and Prorogations are very dangerous, because many other things are exceeding uncertain as well as our Lives. Thou dost not know, but that by some Disease thou mayest quite lose the use of thy Reason; and the natural right Exercise of thy Rational Faculties, and so become in a manner dead, even while thou livest. Or if still thou retainest the free use of thy Reason, yet thou mayest be deprived of the means of Grace, and helps to Salvation.

Y

Thy

Thy Teachers may be removed into a Corner, Isa. 30. 20. Thou mayest be pinch'd with a Famine of hearing the Word of the Lord, Amos 8. 11, 12. and be ready to perish for want of Vision, Prov. 29. 18. Or through Sickness, or some sad Providence, thou mayest be hindred and detain'd from making use of those common Means, which others comfortably and profitably enjoy. Or, if thou hast Liberty to attend on the outward means of Grace, thou mayest receive the Grace of God in vain, 2 Cor. 6. 1. not know and understand in this thy Day the things that belong unto thy Peace, Luke 19. 42. Thou mayest have a Price in thy hand to get Wisdom, and be such a Fool as to have no heart to it, Prov. 17. 16. Thy Mind may become more unprepared, and thy Will more indisposed to receive the Truth, and embrace the Goodness of the Word. Thou mayest be ready to resist the working of the Spirit in the great Ordinances of the Gospel, Acts 7. 51. and mayest render its ordinary Motions ineffectual, and the common Grace of God unsuccessful. Thy continued Delays are likely to render thee more unteachable and untractable, more incurable and unchangeable; more full of false Opinions of God and his Ways, and strong Prejudices and Heart-risings against Religious Practices; more settled in sinful Ways and Courses. Thy chosen Delays will intensify draw on sinful Habits, and evil Customs, which will prove and become a second Nature, and be hardly left, and difficultly laid down. These poisonous Roots will not be easily pluck'd up.

np. These *Leopards Spots* will not be quickly  
fercht out. Thou wilt be as unable to do it  
thy self, as an *Ethiopian* is to *change his Skin*,  
Jer. 13. 23. and it is a *peradventure* whether  
God will cure a customary, habitual procasti-  
nating Sinner, 2 *Tim.* 2. 25. Upon thy wilful  
long Delays God may deny thee the seasonable  
Aids, and soveraign *Auxiliaries* of his Grace;  
suspend the Influences, withdraw the Assistan-  
ces, cease the Motions, and discontinue the  
*Strivings* of his Spirit; and so all outward  
Means enjoyed may prove ineffectual for your  
Good. God may withhold his *special* Grace,  
in Judgment for your Non-improvement of  
*common* Grace. Yea, thy obstinate Delays  
may provoke God to *hide the things of thy Peace*  
*from thy Eyes*, Luke 19. 42. to deliver thee over  
into Satans Power, to leave thee to thy self, to  
*give thee up to thy own Hearts Lusts*, Ps. 81. 12.  
to judicial Blindness of Mind, to dreadful car-  
nal Security, and horrible Hardness of Heart;  
to a *reprobate Mind*, Rom. 1. 28. and a *seared*  
*cauterized Conscience*, 1 *Tim.* 4. 2. By way of  
Punishment of thy Delays, God may suffer  
thee to sin on, till thou comst to be *past feeling*,  
Eph. 4. 19. and not help thee to recover any  
spiritual Sence in a dying Hour: but at last *give*  
*thee the Spirit of Slumber*, Rom. 11. 8. or let  
thee fall into the lamentable Condition of  
downright *Desperation*. Of each of which, a  
learned Writer gives us a very notable and re-  
markable Example: Of the former, out of  
*Petrus Damianus*, of one *Gunizo*, a *factious and*  
*ambitious Person*, to whom the Tempter gave no-

tice of his approaching Death ; but when any Man preached Repentance to him, out of a strange Inciriousness, or the Spirit of Reprobation, he seem'd like a dead and unconcerned Person : in all other Discourses he was awake, and apt to answer. And of the latter, out of Venerable Bede, of a Drunken Monk, who upon his Death bed seem'd to see Hell open'd, and a Place assign'd him near to Caiaphas, and those who crucified our dearest Lord. The Religious Persons that stood about his Bed, call'd on him to repent of his Sins, to implore the Mercies of God, and to trust in Christ ; but he answered, This is no time to change my Life, the Sentence is past upon me, and it is too late.

There may be no room and place for Consideration and Repentance upon thy Death-bed, either through *senselessness* and stupidity, caused by the special Dileale of thy Body, or the sad and direful Divine Judgment : or through too quick a feeling, too deep a sense of pungent corporal Pain, or exquisite Torture of Mind and Conscience : the Tempter busily setting in with thy own guilty awaken'd Conscience, to aggravate thy Sins to thy Terror and Amazement, and to load thee heavily till thou faintest, sinkest and fallest, crusht and broken under the Burden.

But suppose thou shouldst stand at that Day in much more moderate tolerable Circumstances, yet thou mayest be distracted and diverted with the Thoughts of making or altering thy Will, settling thy Estate, disposing and ordering the Affairs of thy Family, stating and clearing

ing the Interests of thy Relatives. And when thou art about to bid thy final and *last Farewel* to every thing in this World that is near and dear to thee, and art under a strange and strong apprehension of *hastily approaching* Death and Judgment, 'twill prove a very *hard task* to gain and maintain a well-composed and *undisturbed Mind* in the management of thy great *Soul-concerns*.

But admit thou shouldst enjoy much Freedom of Thoughts, and have the greatest Advantage imaginable of a quiet sedate Frame and Temper, in the Procedure of that most busie Day and Hour, yet is there a very formidable Danger of thy dying and departing without *rational Satisfaction* about the Goodness and Safety of thy State and Condition, or any comfortable Evidence of the Divine Acceptance of thy Death-bed Performance.

3. To delay the Redemption of thy Time, is highly *unreasonable*, and very *foolish*: to put off the building of a spiritual Temple in thy Soul, as the *Jews* excused their Neglect of re-edifying the material Temple, by saying, *The Time is not come*, Hag. 1. 2.

What Folly is it, to *lose* the *present*, which God has put in thy *own hand*, and to determine and *dispose* of the *future* Time, which only and wholly reits in the *Hand of God*, and is quite *out of thine*. To put all to the *venture* of repenting and securing thy State *hereafter*, when so many have *ruined* and undone themselves without remedy or recovery, by lingering and *loitering Delays*.

What a plain and apparent *Self-delusion* is it, to except against and wave the *present Time*, because it is *present*; since when that Time which now is future shall become present, you must then put that off for the same reason that now you put this by?

What a *silly Cheat* dost thou put upon thy self, while thou dost pretend a purpose to make but a very *short Delay*; a Desire to enjoy thy Sin but a little longer, it may be but *this once more*; and a Resolution then to part and shake hands with it for ever? when as the very *next touch* may deadly infect thee, the very *next taste* poison thee; *one other Closure* with sensual Pleasure will in all probability more deeply enamour thee; one farther embrace of Sin more bewitch and fascinate, inebriate and intoxicate thee; *one step more* presently carry thee into a Snare, that will entangle and hold thee fast for ever. Is it likely that thou wilt leave thy Sin, when thou shalt be *more in love* with it, *more enslaved* to it? and that thou wilt be able to deny thy Lust, when thou hast greatly *provoked* and *enflamed* it, by farther gratifying and fulfilling it? Dost not thou take a direct course to besot and infatuate thy self, and to bring thy self, at last to delight in the *Remembrance* of those beloved Sins which thou shalt not be able to *act* any longer? Thou *Fool* darest thou venture to break the Commandments of God now, and pretend a purpose to keep them hereafter; when every breach of God's holy Laws will *lessen* thy *Awe* and Reverence of them, make thee more unfit and unable to keep them,  
more

more averſe to the Obſervation of them, more ready to condemn them, more prone and bold to violate them for the future ?

How lamentably doſt thou *abuse* thy ſelf, by encouraging thy ſelf to *Sin* at preſent, upon hopes of *repenting* hereafter ? that is, in plain terms, in hopes of accusing and condemning thy ſelf, of bluſhing and becoming aſham'd and confounded ; of being ſorely troubled, greatly grieved, and ſorry exceedingly at thy very heart ; of falling out with thy ſelf at laſt, calling thy ſelf *Fool, Mad-man, Beaſt* ; and puniſhing and taking *Revenge* upon thy ſelf for what thou haſt done.

What a *vain Confidence* and groundleſs Expectation is it, to think thou ſhalt eaſily get rid of thy Sins, when they will be much more *ri- veted and radicated* : and preſently recover the Favour of God, when thou haſt more *highly provoked* and incenſed him with thy aggravated Sins, and multiplied Provocations : and quickly regain the Motions of God's Spirit, when thou haſt *grieved and driven him away* by thy very tedious long Delaies.

What a falſe and *imaginary Hope* is it, to look at laſt to obtain the Pardon of all thy Sins, without having reſpect to God's Commandments in the courſe of thy Life ? when God does intend and promiſe *Pardon* in order to *Holineſſ*, and chiefly deſign it as an *Encouragement* to chearful faithful ſincere Obedience. There is *Forgiveneſſ with thee* ; that thou mai'eſt be ſeared : ſaies the Pſalmiſt. *Pſ. 130. 4.*

How *unreaſonable* is it, to live in a continual



Neglect of thy present necessary indispensable Duty, and to expect that God at last should yield to accept the *Will* for the *Deed*, when the *Deed* is out of thy own Power meerly through thy own *Default*?

What *Weakness* is it, to delight to delay, when *nothing is to be gotten by it*? when thou canst not hope that God hereafter will alter his law, change his Covenant, accept and save thee upon *cheaper Terms* and easier Conditions than now he is pleased to propose to thee. When God's *Will* is not likely to alter, nor thy own *Will* more likely by Delay to be wrought to a Compliance with the Divine Will, what is the meaning of all thy tarrying? Is it prudent to *delay* thy *Duty*, when thou canst not *retard* thy *Punishment*? when though thou lingerest and delaicst, yet thy *Judgment* now of a long time lingreth not, thy *Damnation* slumbreth not, 2 Pet. 2. 3.

Yea. what an *unaccountable* carriage is it, by making *Delaies* to cast thy self into grand *Inconveniencies*; to run thy self into such unhappy Circumstances, that thou shalt have hereafter a *more painful* difficult *Work* to do than ever, *less time* to do it in, *less strength* within, and *smaller aids* and helps from *without*, from Heaven above, to do it with; and shalt meet with *more hindrances* and obstructions in the doing of it from the Devil, the World, and thy own *Corruptions*?

What an *absurdity* is it to *multiply* *Delaies*, and never to make *any end* of them? to find no leisure in all thy Life to live well? to lengthen out, and let thy morrow grow till it reach

reach the years of Priamus or Nestor ; and, if it were possible, the full Age of Methuselah ? St. Austin confesses and condemns his former lingring dilatory Temper. *I was clearly convinc'd by the Truth, saies he, and had nothing to answer but only lazy and sleepy Words, another time, shortly, a while hence, let me alone but a little longer : But my Delaies were endless and infinite, and would keep and observe no measures or limits. I prayed in this manner to thee, saies he ; Lord give me the gift of Chastity and Continence : But I said in my heart, pray do not give it yet to me, for I was afraid lest thou shouldst hear me too quickly, and heal me too soon, &c. And at last he reasoned himself out of this unreasonable Humour, in this manner ; How long, how long shall I put it off till to morrow, and next day ? Why not now ? Why should not this very Hour put an end to my lewd and loose Life.*

What unhappy Folly is it to delay the Time of thy Youth, and so to lose the Flower of thy Age ?

What a Reproach and Disparagement to thy Judgment and Understanding, that when thou art come to years of Maturity, arriv'd to thy Middle Age, thou shouldst shew thy self so inconsiderate and indiscreet as still to delay, and not use thy Reason and Judgment aright ?

What a farther and higher degree of Folly is it, to defer the Redemption of thy Time till Old Age ? The Stoick will tell thee, 'Tis late to spare when thou comest to the Bottom : for it is not only the least, but the very worst, that is left to the last. Art not thou asham'd, saies he, to reserve nothing

but the Reliques, the Dross, the Dregs and Refuse for thy self; and to set that Time for the bettering of thy Mind and amendment of thy Manners, which can be bestowed on nothing else? Is it not extreemly late, saies he, *tho.* to begin to live, when thou shouldst make an end of Life? What is so foolish a Forgetfulness of Mortality, as to defer wholesome Counsels to the fiftieth or sixtieth Year of thy Age, and to think to enter upon a vertuous Life at such a time, as very few have lengthned out their daies to? I may here apply those Words of Epicurus, commended and adopted by Seneca, *What is more uncomely than an Old Man beginning to live?* Though the Truth is, in the case of Godly Living, *Better late than never.* But is it any act or part of Wisdom, to resolve to begin to redeem the Time at such an Age, when thou wilt blush, in consideration of thy Years, to discover to any thy wonderful, shameful, gross Ignorance of the things of God, in order to thy receiving Information and Instruction, and furnishing thy Mind with necessary Knowledge; and, through Weakness of Understanding and Memory be more incapable of learning the great things of the Chriltian Religion, and Gospel-Institution, than thou wast in thy Younger Time: And wilt be backward to attempt so ungrateful a Work as openly to censure the Actions and Carriages of thy past Life, and to condemn and discontent thy old Companions, by forsaking their Fellowship, and taking up a course of Life so wholly different from, and directly contrary to theirs: And when thou wilt find it so tough an undertaking,

taking, so troublesome and *uneasie* a task, to conquer and master, to expel and extirpate *inveterate* vicious Habits, which have been growing all thy Life, and to get vertuous Dispositions and gracious Habits introduced and planted in thy Heart? Is this to conclude and act rationally, to think to turn thy self at large to the full Exercise of all thy Christian Duty, when thou art reduc'd to a little *Nook* and *Corner* of thy Life? What lamentable wretched Folly is it, to defer all to an *Old Age*?

But is not this the most *marvellous Folly* and *Madness* of all, to adjourn the necessary Work and weighty Business of Redemption of Time to a *Dying Day* and *Hour*? or to put off all to a *Death-bed*; and so to make that the Time of *beginning*, which should be only the Time of *renewing* Repentance; and to cast thy self into such *straits*, in which thou shalt have no time to receive, and make use of that *variety* of Gods Grace, his preventing, restraining, assisting, furthering, quickning, strengthening, confirming, persevering Grace, which it is his *usual sapiential Method* to dispense and afford for the *gradual* bringing returning Sinners, in the way of Obedience and Holy Living to a participation of the great Rewards of a blessed Eternity. Yea, to conclude and shut up thy self within such *narrow Cancells*, Bounds and Limits, wherein thou shalt be *utterly unable* to discharge and perform a *great part* of that Duty, which the Gospel expressly requires as the *ordinary Qualification*, and *common clearly revealed Condition* in order to Salvation; unable to do the *Commandments*.

*mandments of God, Rev. 22. 14. to keep the Commandments of God, and the Faith of Jesus, c. 14. v. 12. to do, to keep them all; when thou shalt want the Objects and Opportunities of performing the several Duties, and exercising the several Graces, which a course of Obedience plainly includes: unable to answer the end of Christs Death, by living to Righteousness, 1 Pet. 2. 24. to exercise Chastity, Temperance, Mortification, as acts of Election, when thy Body is weak, and low, and languishing; no Lust stirring, no Temptation to such a Sin assaulting: unable to live soberly, righteously, and Godly in this present World, Tit. 2. 12. to run a Race, Heb. 12. 1. patiently to continue in well-doing, Rom. 2. 7. without fainting, Gal. 6. 9. For these are things, which cannot be dispatch'd on a sudden, perform'd in a trice, or shrunk up into a narrow scantling, so small a pittance of Time. How can thy Light sufficiently shine before Men, that they may see thy good Works; when thy Candle is just sinking into the Socket?*

What a wild Fancy, and idle Imagination is it, to flatter thy self into the Perswasion, that some sudden flashings of a passionate Repentance, some short gleams of Piety, and little scatterings of Devotion; a few good Thoughts, or Godly Words; some weak ineffectual Purposes, imperfect Promises, fallacious Resolutions; or, at most, the Performance of some single Actions, will, upon a Death-bed, be acceptable to God, without habitual Sanctity, and an industrious persevering Piety. That a few Prayers and Tears, Sighs and Groans, an ex-

torted

tormented Sorrow, and enforced Sadness; a compulsory Confession of thy Sins, and a Gift of Charity left to the Poor, out of that Estate, which now is *rather another Mans* than thy own, since thou thy self art able to keep it no longer; That such *little slight things* as these will serve as a *sufficient Composition* to be offer'd to God, and prove available to cross and cancel all the Debts, and wipe off the many and great Guilts of a *fifty or threescore Years Impiety* and Iniquity: And that the Pardon of *all thy Sins* will be comfortably sealed, and thy Soul be certainly consign'd to the Joys of *Paradise*, and Glory of Heaven, by receiving the *Sacrament* of the Lord's Supper immediately before thy Departure. That if thou canst but form and frame thy shortest Breath to call upon God with these five Words, *Lord have Mercy upon me*, but a little before thy last Gasps; they will really prove as powerful and available for the happy Translation of thy Soul to Heaven, as the mumbling over those five Words of Consecration, *Hoc est enim Corpus meum*, for this is my Body, is by the Papists imagined to be effectual for the Transubstantiation of their Host.

Is this consistent with the use of Reason and Consideration, to venture all upon a *Death-bed Repentance*? to take a *wilful Course* to bring thy self into *such a Condition*, in which thou shalt be utterly *unable*, with all the help that can be afforded thee, to find out *one Promise*, or to meet with *one Example* in the *whole Bible*, that will *fully reach*, or plainly and properly speak to thy *particular case*, and afford thee *sufficient*

ficient support, relief and comfort, in that dark and dismal Day and Hour ?

*Obj.* No Promise ? may some object, and say ; Why what do you make of those Words ? *At what time soever a Sinner doth repent him of his Sins, from the bottom of his Heart, I will put all his Wickedness out of my Remembrance saith the Lord.*

*Ans.* For answer, give me leave to tell you what others make of these Words, and those very great Divines too : ‘ There are no such Words in the whole Bible, (says the very Learned Bp. Taylor) nor any nearer to the sense of them than those Words of the Prophet Ezekiel, chap. 18. 21. *But if the Wicked will turn from all his Sins that he hath committed, and keep all my Statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die.* Or those, chap. 33. 14, 15. in which you shall find Repentance more fully described ; *When I say unto the Wicked, Thou shalt surely die : If he turn from his Sin, and do that which is lawful and right : if the Wicked restore the Pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the Statutes of Life without committing Iniquity ; he shall surely live, he shall not die.* Here only is the condition of Pardon ; to leave all your Sins, to keep all Gods Statutes, to walk in them, to abide, to proceed, and make progress in them ; and this, without the interruption by a deadly Sin, [without Iniquity] to make restitution, — Satisfaction for all Injury to our Neighbours  
Fame,

'Fame, all wrongs done to his Soul :---When  
'this is done according to thy utmost Power,  
'then thou hast repented truly, then thou hast  
'a title to the Promise : *Thou shalt surely live,*  
'*thou shalt not die*, for thy old Sins thou hast  
'formerly committed. This place of *Ezekiel*  
'is it which is so often mistaken for that com-  
'mon saying, *At what time soever*, &c. Repen-  
'tance as stated by the Prophet cannot be done  
'[*at what time soever*] not upon a Mans Death-  
'bed.--- Let that saying therefore no more de-  
'ceive you, or be made a colour to countenance  
'a persevering Sinner, or a Death-bed Pe-  
'nitent.

And it is observable what a free reflection the  
judicious *Chillingworth*, in a Sermon preached  
before *King Charles the First*, was bold to make  
upon that Passage, which then stood in the en-  
trance to our Common-Prayer-Book : 'I would  
'to God, says he, the Composers of our Litur-  
'gy, out of a care of avoiding mistakes, and to  
'take away Occasion of cavilling our Liturgy,  
'and out of Fear of encouraging Carnal Men  
'to security in sinning, had been so provident,  
'as to set down in Terms, the first Sentence  
'taken out of the 18th. of *Ezekiel*, and not have  
'put in the place of it an ambiguous, and  
'(though not in it self, yet accidentally, by rea-  
'son of the mistake to which it is subject) I fear  
'very often a pernicious Paraphrase ; for, where-  
'as thus they make it, *At what time soever*---  
'saith the Lord ; the plain truth, if you will hear  
'it, is, the Lord doth not say so, these are not  
'the very Words of God, but the Paraphrase of  
'Men :



' Men : The Words of God are—where, I  
 ' hope, you easily observe that there is no such  
 ' Word as, *At what time soever a Sinner doth*  
 ' *repent*, &c. and that there is a wide diffe-  
 ' rence between this (as the Word *repent* usually  
 ' sounds in the Ears of the People) and turning  
 ' from all Sins, and keeping all Gods Statutes :  
 ' That indeed, having no more in it but Sor-  
 ' row and good Purposes, may be done easily  
 ' and certainly at the last Gasp ; and it is very  
 ' strange that any Christian, who dies in his  
 ' right Senses, and knows the difference between  
 ' Heaven and Hell should fail of the performing  
 ' it : but this Work of turning, keeping, and  
 ' doing, is—ordinarily a Work of Time, a  
 ' long and laborious Work (but yet Heaven is  
 ' very well worth it) and if you mean to go  
 ' through with it, you had need go about it  
 ' presently. And I find the Reverend and  
 Learned Mr. Robert Bolton expressing himself to  
 the same purpose : I marvel, says he, *that any*  
*should be so blindfolded, and baffled by the Devil,*  
*as to embolden himself to drive off until the last,*  
*by that Place before Confession : At what time so-*  
*ever, &c. Especially, if he look upon the Text*  
*from whence it is taken ; which, methinks, being*  
*rightly understood, and the Conditions well consider-*  
*ed, is most punctual and precise, to fright any from*  
*that desperate Folly : The Words run thus, Ezek.*  
 18. 21, 22, &c. Hence it appears, that if any  
 Man expect upon Good ground, any Portion in this  
 precious Promise of Mercy and Grace, he must leave  
 all his Sins, and keep all Gods Statutes—Now  
 what space is left to come to Comfort, by keeping  
 all

all Gods Statutes ; when thou art presently to pass to that highest and dreadful Tribunal, to give an exact and strict Account for the continual Breach of all Gods Laws all thy Life long ?

But I must desire the Objector to remember, that when some *Alterations* were made by *Authority* in our *Liturgy*, the *Paraphrase* was removed, and the proper Words of *Scripture* put in the room of it : and now the self-deceiving *Procrastinator* will not well know *what to do* for want of a *What time soever*, &c. which is nowhere now to be found or met with in all his *Bible*, or *Common-Prayer-Book*.

*Obj.* But a Friend to Delays may further object, and say ; Though, I confess, I was out in alledging the *Promise*, yet certainly there is an *Example* that affords sufficient ground of Comfort to a late and Death-bed Penitent. You cannot deny, says he, but that the *Thief* was converted upon the *Cross*, in the *last Hour* of his Life ; and, notwithstanding his extream late Repentance, was accepted and received by *Christ* to *Mercy*.

*Ans.* It is especially from this *Example* abused, that ignorant *Dawbers*, and untaught *Teachers* take occasion to prepare and make up that *Opiate Divinity*, which they minister to the Souls of superficial Death-bed Penitents, and so send them away into the *Paradise of Fools*. And this is the great *Rock of Presumption*, which many build, or rather split upon : They resolve to enjoy the Pleasures of Sin during the Season

Season of their Health and strength; and intend and hope to repent of their Sins, and turn to God, to accept of Christ and make sure of Heaven upon the *Cross* of their *last Sickneß*, and with the beatified *Thief* to slip immediatly into *Paradise*.

But I shall labour to convince you, that the Instance of the *Thief* upon the *Cross* will not suit your Condition, nor serve your turn. For here consider with me these few things :

1. That, it may be, he was not *so vile* and vicious a Person, as he is commonly taken to have been : for *Athenians* and *Latins* do not alwaies note a *Thief* or *Robber*, but signify a *Soldier* ; and out of Zeal to the *Jews* he might have somewhat transgress'd the *Roman Laws* : It may be otherwise he was not altogether so bad a Man : But thou knowest the *heinous* circumstances of thy own mislead and ill-governed Life. But,

2. Suppose him to have been a notorious *Ill Liver* : yet it is to be considered, that the Conversion and Salvation of the *Thief* is an *extraordinary* Instance : For,

(1.) The *Thief* was converted at a very remarkable Time, when the Son of God and Saviour of the World shed his precious Blood, and suffer'd a painful shameful Death, to satisfy the Divine Law and Justice, and to redeem and recover lost and miserable Mankind : And certainly if ever God would work a Miracle, he would do it then. Dost thou hope to exercise

ease Repentance unto Life at the Hour of Death, and to sue out a Pardon with thy last Breath, when thou hast not heartily and devoutly call'd upon God in *all thy Life*, because God had Mercy on the Thief upon the Cross? Tell me, canst thou expect that *Christ* should come *another Time* into the World, and suffer again, and die *once more* for Mankind? if so, then thou maiest conceive *great Hopes* indeed that God will do the like again, and it may fare as well with thee as it did with the Thief. *Christ* then triumphing on the Cross, (saies the worthy Mr. Daniel Dyke) did as Princes do in the Triumph of Entering into their Kingdoms; they pardon gross Offences before committed, such as they pardon not afterwards. Mr. Robert Bolton useth an Illustration somewhat like it; *A King sometimes pardons a Malefactor at the Place of Execution*, saies he; wilt thou therefore run desperately into some horrible Villany, deserving Death, hoping to be that One amongst many Thousands?

If God do good to any Sinner, that has securely liv'd in his Sins all his Daies, and bring him home to himself at last; he goes out of the way of his ordinary Grace and Providence; and the Conversion of a Sinner upon his Death-bed, it is a high expression of extraordinary Grace and Mercy, an Act of God's absolute Power and Sovereignty: And surely it is safest and most comfortable to expect from God not meerly what he *can* do, but what he has promis'd in his Word, and given us plain notice that he *will* do; and what in the ordinary course of his Providence he declares him-

himself ready to do. I make no Question, but God is *able* in the *shortest* Time to work such clear and *strong* Convictions, and to make such powerful *deep* Impressions upon the Mind and Heart of a *dying* Sinner, as should have the *virtue* and power of a *general* Habit, or be *equivalent* to many *particular* Habits; and in case of longer continuance of Life should be *effectual* to a *lasting* persevering Obedience. And I readily acknowledg, that the Nature of God is infinitely merciful: and that it was the gracious Nature of God which mov'd and inclined him to make the Evangelical Promise; and, I think, he has not so restrain'd and bound up himself by the New Covenant, but that, if he please he may use his *Prerogative Royal*, and act beyond his own Covenant-obligation, and *ordinary, certain and express* Promise, to the saving of a Sinner upon the *change* of his Mind and Heart, and his having an *eternal* desire of *pleasing* God, begotten in him by *special* Grace; who has no time to perform the *constant* Obedience of a holy Life: But, is it easy for thee to expect, that an infinitely wise, holy and just God should at last act in a very *extraordinary* way, to *save thee* who wouldst *destroy thy self* and hast long neglected the *ordinary* Means of thy Soul's Salvation; and wouldst by no means know and do the things that belonged unto thy Peace? How very justly may God at last *laugh at thy Calamity, and mock when thy Fear cometh?* Prov. 1. 26.

(2.) The Learned Author of the Great Exemplar thinks it *probable* that the good Thief

was much advantaged by the intervening Accident of dying at the same time with Christ ; there being a natural Compassion produced in us towards the Partners of our Miseries. For Christ was not void of humane Passions, though he had in them no Imperfection or Irregularity ; and therefore might be invited by the Society of Misery, the rather to admit him to participate his Joies : and St. Paul proves him to be a merciful High-Priest, because he was touched with a feeling of our Infirmities ; the first expression of which was to this Blessed Thief.

If the Thief had not met with such an extraordinary Opportunity of Suffering with Christ, and entering with Christ into Paradise ; though he had been converted, he might have tarried till he had suffer'd many Years Afflictions and Persecutions for the sake of Christ and his holy Gospel, and perform'd a long and tedious Work of Crucifying the Old Man, crucifying the Flesh, with the Affections and Lusts ; of Mortification, Self-denial, and sincere Obedience. The good Thief, by special Favour was let into Paradise at a *privy Door*, as I may say ; but you and I must look to go thither, and enter the ordinary Way. Consider,

(3.) That the Conversion and Salvation of the Thief is not only an extraordinary, but a singular Instance. The Example of the Thief, it is but *one* ; and besides this one there is *not one more* to be produced out of all that Sacred Book, which contains the History of several thousand Years : and for this *one* that sped how many millions of late and Death-bed Penitents have

have eternally miscarried, sadly repented of their late Repentance, and inherited the uncomfortable Portion of Fools ? And if thou shalt venture to drive off all to the very last, hast not thou very great cause to fear that *thou* shalt become an unhappy *Cast-away*, as well as *so many* have been *before thee* ? Thou dost not think it prudent or *safe* to follow or rely upon *single* or very unusual *Precedents* in other things. If a *thousand* Persons should have perished by the taking of any *poisoned* Meat, and *one only* have been *miraculously* preserved ; wouldst thou dare to *taste* of that or the *like Food*, and hope to *do well*, because *one once* escaped, when a *thousand* died ? Wilt thou expect to be accommodated, and upon any great Occasion provided for by *Miracle*, because God *once divided the Sea*, and caused his Israel to *pass through*, and made the *Waters* to stand as an heap ; Pl. 78. 13. *rained down Manna* upon them to eat, and gave them of the *Corn of Heaven*, so that *Man did eat Angels Food* ; *rained Flesh* also upon them as *Dust*, and feathered *Fowls* like as the *Sand of the Sea* ; let it fall in the midst of their *Camp*, round about their *Habitations* ; vers. 24, 25, 27, 28. *clave also the Rocks in the Wilderness*, and gave them drink as out of the great *Depths* ; vers. 15, 16. and fed *Elijah the Prophet* by the Ministry of *Ravens*, whom he *commanded to bring him Bread and Flesh both in the Morning and in the Evening* ? 1 King. 17. 4. 6. Because the *Thief* was happily converted at the last Hour, dost thou conclude so thou shalt be in like manner ? But why shouldst not thou

thou be startled and affrighted by the sad Example of the *other Thief*, who still lay in his accustomed Sins, died and perished in his Iniquities; and though his *Saviour* was so near him, fell irrecoverably into *eternal Damnation*? The *one Example* may serve to keep thee from *abusing the other to Security*.

(4.) Do not offer any longer to draw the *good Thief* into Example, and to embolden thy self thereby wittingly and willingly to defer thy Repentance till the *last Hour*, and to hope for Mercy at the very last; for, let me tell thee, There is a great deal of difference between the case and circumstances of the *blest Thief*, and thyself: for, suppose the *Thief* had heard somewhat of Christ by general fame before, some commendation of his *Doctrine* and *Miracles*, and an intimation of Christ's *Profession* that a Kingdom belonged to him, though not of this World; yet thou canst not prove, that ever he had in all his Life a clear direct Call before *this Day and Hour*, in which he was Christ's Companion upon the Cross, and heard his gracious Speeches, and his Compassionate Prayer poured out to his Father for his Crucifiers; and beheld and considered his excellent Vertues and admirable Graces, in the time of his deepest Sorrows and sorest sufferings. This was the *first time* that the *Thief* had any Converse with Christ, and the *first Day of Grace* that probably was ever vouchsafed to him. Speak now, is this *thy case*? Art thou able to use *this Plea*, that hitherto thou wast never plainly invited to Repentance, now expressly called



called to come to Christ? Hast not thou liv'd long under the Means of Grace, and frequented the Ministry of the Gospel? Hast not thou heard, yea often heard the joyful sound of the Word, and felt the sweet motions of the Spirit? May not Christ complain of thee, and such as thee, *How often would I have gathered you even as a Hen gathereth her Chickens under her Wings, and ye would not?* Mat. 23. 37.

The Thief had no distinct Knowledge of Christ before: His case was as if a Turk or Heathen should turn Christian, and receive the Sacrament of Baptism, and therewithal the Remission of the Sins of his State of Ignorance, upon his Death-bed. But thou wast very early baptized into the Name of Christ, and hast solemnly entered into Covenant with Christ, and frequently ratified and confirm'd that Covenant, and all a long openly and outwardly profess'd thyself the Disciple of Jesus, and Servant of Christ. And therefore, if still thou livest in Sin, and deferrest thy Repentance, and puttest off thy Obedience; thou failest in the performance of thy solemn Promise, and grand Obligation; and art false and treacherous to the Lord Christ; and art to account for Breach of Contract, and plain Rebellion against thy Heavenly Lord and King. And how canst thou hope, when thou hast refused and denied to present the Service of thy Life to him, that God will be satisfied with the weeping and howling of a careless Sinner unwillingly departing, and forced to go to a speedy reckoning in another World.

Consider,

(5.) That

(5.) That the good Thief redeemed and improved his Time at last in so notable and wonderful a way and manner, as *no Man ever did*, or *can* beside. Surely *thou* canst never hope to do *that Honour* to God and Christ upon a *Death-bed*, which the *Thief* did in a *short* time upon the *Cross*. The *Thief*, brought *more Glory* to God and Christ at the time of his *Departure* out of this World, than *another Man's whole Life* can do. *What Age* of the World can give *Example* of *so strong a Faith*, or produce a *Pattern* of *greater Piety*? for he believed *him* to be the *Saviour*, whom the *Jews* accused as a *grand Malefactor*, and *Pilate* condemned, who was crucified by the *Gentles*, and vilified by the *Jews*, and openly reviled by the other *Thief*: He expected *Life* and *Salvation* from an afflicted, suffering, *dying* Person, hanging in a publick shameful manner, full of *Pain*, upon a *Cross*, under the *Sadnesses*, *Sorrows* and *Pangs* of *Death*; who was esteemed *smitten* and seemed to *Man's Sense* *forsaken* of *God*, whom he had alwaies profess'd to be his *Father*: In the very *Extremity* of *Christ's Passion*, the *good Thief* believed him to be the *holy Son* of *God*, the *Lord* of *Life*, able to *save* in *Death*: He beheld the *Beauty* and *Glory* of *Christ*, through the dark *Ignominy* of the *Cross*: He saw him *naked*, *wounded*, a *Partner* of the *same* *Torment* upon the *Tree*, enduring the *servile Punishment* of the *Cross*: and yet was heartily perswaded *Christ* was a *King*. *Speak*, O *Thief*, saies *St. Austin*, *where is the Throne* of *Sapphire*? *where are the Cherubims* and the *heaven*.

ly Hosts ? where is the Crown, the Scepner, and the Purple, that thou shouldst count Christ a King ? Dost thou see any other Crown than that of Thorns, any other Scepter than the Nails in his Hands, any other Purple than his Blood, any other Throne than the Cross, any other Officers and Ministers than the Executioners ? See saies, St. Bernard, how sharp sighted Faith is ; what quick and piercing Eyes it has ; how it apprehends and discerns Christ to be the Son of God, though hanging, bleeding, dying upon the Cross : How evidently it discovers the great King appearing in the mean form of a Servant, and taking a Journey through the strait way of painful shameful Suffering into his heavenly Kingdom of Glory.

How far did the rare and noble Faith of this Thief excel the Faith even of all the Disciples and Apostles of Christ, who now at last fearfully stumbled at Christ's Cross, though sometime they had seen him raising the very Dead ? Peter believed, when he saw Christ walking upon the Sea ; Mat. 14. 28. but the Thief believed, when he saw Christ's Feet fast nail'd to the Crots, and beheld him flowing all over in Blood from Head to Foot. The Apostles believed, when they saw Christ transfigur'd before them ; and his Face shining as the Sun, and his Raiment white as the Light, chap. 17. 2. but the Thief believed, when he saw Christ, not transfigured, but strangely disfigured, miserably mangled and deformed ; and his Face, not shining, but sullied, and sadly be-lined with Spittle, Wounds and Blood. Martha believed, when she saw Christ power-  
fully

fully raising a dead and even stinking Lazarus, from the very Grave, who had been dead four Daies ; *John* 11. 27, 39. but the Thief believed when he saw *Christ* hanging in the Valley of the Shadow of Death, almost *expiring*, and very near giving up the Ghost. Others believed, when they saw *Christ* daily working divine Miracles, and honoured by the People with solemn Acclamations ; but the Thief believed at such a Time, when *Christ* wrought no Miracles to demonstrate his Divinity, and testify his Innocency ; and was rejected, despised and in open derision of Men. He cleaved to him, when the very Apostles and Disciples themselves forsook and fled from him. He believed in *Christ*, when he had the strongest Temptations to the contrary ; when *Christ* was seemingly in as low a Condition as himself. Verily *Christ* found not so great Faith, no not in *Israel* : no not in his own Disciples even after his Resurrection. All the holy Actions of another Man's Life, are not likely to amount to the Service done to God and *Christ* by this one act of the Thief's Faith.

Besides ; his pregnant Faith was eminently, productive of many good Works, both internal and external : He feared God ; acknowledged his own Sin and Guilt, with Godly Sorrow, true Contrition, and hearty Repentance ; condemned himself, justified *Jesus*, and publicly testified that *Christ* was a Person perfectly just and righteous, unblameable and innocent : This Man hath done nothing amiss, said he, *Luke* 23. 41. He commiserated his causelessly calamitous Condition, when the other vile brutish

Thief was void of Humanity, and instead of pitying mock'd and *scoffed* at a dying Person. He maintain'd the Honour of his Saviour against the Railery and *Blasphemy* of his Fellow-sufferer, who derided the Office, especially the *Kingly* Dignity of Christ. He called him *Lord*, his Lord; embracing him as the true *Messias*. He honoured him, whom *Judas* betrayed: He boldly confess'd and defended him, whom *Peter* timorously denied, and fearfully forswore. He plainly declared that he sought and look'd for a future State, and better Life. He freely acknowledg'd that *this same* suffering dying Person should have immediately the Power of *Paradise*, and Authority to place him in the Seat of the Blessed. As *Daniel* prayed toward *Jerusalem* and the *Temple*, when it was in its ruins and *rubbish*, Dan. 6. 10. so the penitent Thief prayed to *Christ*, when he was in the lowest State of his Humiliation: When *Christ* was almost entering into his Grave, he begg'd and intreated that *Christ* would remember him when he came into his Kingdom. Which of the *Eleven* were heard to utter so gracious a Word to their Saviour, in his last Pangs, and dying Agonies? This penitent Thief prayed in Faith, and look'd for Healing from the Wings of this *Sun of Righteousness*, Mal. 4. 6. when this glorious *Sun* rose from the *West*, as I may say. He was so humble, that he would not presume to ask of *Christ* a participation of his Kingdom, or any great and high Honour in it; but only requested that he might not be forgotten by him: the way of remembering and considering

considering him, he left wholly to him. He shewed a very exemplary *Patience* upon the Cross: he did not *murmur* against God, or the *Magistrate*; but owned the *Dueness* and *Justice* of his Punishment, and was content to bear it, and desired not the *removal* or *abatement* of it: he meekly and quietly accepted his corporal temporal Punishment, being only *solicitous* for his Soul's Salvation. He charitably *reprehended* his Fellow-Thief and *forbad* him to proceed in his Blasphemy, invited him to Repentance, and sought to further the Salvation of his Neighbour. Thou canst not expect ever to meet with *such an Occasion*, to try and exercise thy Faith and Obedience: and therefore thou hast no imaginable reason to nourish up thy self in Security, upon presumptuous Hopes of *farine as he did*, since thou canst not *do as he did*.

(6.) And lastly; Suppose thou shouldst at last redeem thy Time so well, as, by God's help, with the good Thief to act and exercise *unfeigned Repentance* upon thy Death-bed; yet, I pray, shew me, and help me a little to understand, how thou art *likely* to get that *Comfort*, and gain that sweet *Peace* of Conscience, which a *more early* Redemption of thy Time would in all probability bring thee in, and bless thee with in thy last Hours. A thinking, understanding *Hearben* will tell thee. He only can chearfully entertain, and gladly welcome Death when it comes, who has a long time been sitting and preparing himself for it.

The Thief upon the Cross, had indeed full *Assurance* that his Soul was in a good Condition

at present ; and such Ground of strongest Confidence and most comfortable Acquiescence, that he should be very quickly in a pure and blissful and happy State in another World. But it is not to be expected that thou shouldst arrive to such Assurance in the *same* or the *like* way that he did : for *Christ* then hung upon the Cross by him, and had compassion on him, and *re-veal'd* it to him, that his Repentance ( which was God's extraordinary gracious Gift ) was Repentance unto Life, than his Person was accepted, and his Prayer heard ; and that a *higher Favour* should be shewn him, and a greater Good be bestowed upon him, that was *expressly desired* by him : That his *Lord* was ready to take the Key of *Paradise* into his hand, and would very quickly open the Door and let him in, and give him *entrance into the Joy of his Lord*. All which is included in Christ's gracious Answer to the humble Petition of the penitent Thief ; which he strengthened and confirmed with an earnest Asseveration, *Verily I say unto thee*, I will not only be mindful of thee, but *thou shalt be with me* ; and that not only sometime hereafter, but *to Day*, immediately after thy Death and Departure ; *To day shalt thou be with me in Paradise* ; be joyfully received, and pleasurably entertain'd in that happy Repository and Receptacle of Spirits, which God hath prepared for holy Souls.

But when thou shalt come to lie upon a *Death-bed*, and be *conscious* to thy self that thou hast led a very sinful and ungodly Life all thy daies ; and that *this* is the *first time* that thou  
hast

hast in good earnest minded *this great Work* ; Suppose that the workings of thy Heart should be sincere, *how* canst thou *evidence* thy Uprightness to thy self ; prove and make out to thy self, and satisfy thy self, in any *ordinary* way, that thy Conversion is true and real, sound and sincere ? When thou shalt *plainly apprehend*, that thou art changing thy Place and Habitation, State and Condition, all of a sudden ; thou *canst not but conclude*, that it highly concerns thee to humble thy self to God, to beg his Pardon, and promise him fair ; and to resolve, by all possible means to shake off thy Sins, which are too grievous and *dangerous Companions* to carry along with the into the other World ; to cast away thy Sins, at least as a *Man in a Storm* begins to cast away his Goods, because if he keeps his much valued Goods, he must lose his dearest Life. But dost not thou remember the famous remarkable Story of *Antiochus*, 2 Mac. 9. who when the Judgment of God followed him, and smote him with an incurable and invisible Plague, with a Pain of the Bowels that was remediless, and sore Torments of the inner Parts, so that the filthiness of his Smell was noisome to all his Army and no Man could endure to carry him for his intolerable Stink and he himself could not abide his own Smell : Then he began to leave off his great Pride, — This wicked Person vowed also unto the Lord that he would set the holy City at Liberty, make all the Jews equals to the Citizens of Athens, garnish the holy Temple with goodly Gifts, become a Jew himself, and go through all the World that was inhabited, and declare the Power of God.



But the Lord would now no more have Mercy upon him; having suffer'd grievously, he died most miserably. And hast not thou known some, and heard of others, who being condemned by Law, or cast upon Beds of Sickness, have outwardly manifested as great and probable signs of true Repentance, upon seeming near approaches of Death and Judgment, as thou canst now be well supposed to do: and yet when God by a kind and merciful Providence has restored them, all that look'd so lively and lovely has quite *vanish'd* and come to nothing; these fairly promising, hopeful Penitents have afterward fallen to their old Biass, prov'd as vile and vicious, *as bad and worse* than ever they were before. And it may be, *thou thyself* hast been in the like case, and done as much heretofore as now; and hast reason to remember thy false, deceitful, *treacherous* dealing with God in former Instances, on the like Occasions; how many of thy own Purposes and Promises have fail'd and been quite lost; and hast cause enough to *suspect* and *question* the Truth and Goodness of all the present fairest shews, and goodliest Appearances of thy Repentance.

And here *this great Difficulty* will at last unavoidably lie before thee, whether thou dost not seek, return and enquire after God, only because he now begins to *slay* thee in good earnest, *Psal. 78. 34.* Here will be the doubt and dispute, how thou wilt be able to *determine*, that the Confession of thy Sins, and Condemnation of thy self, thy Resolutions and Promises of better Obedience, in case of longer Life, are not all the meer effect of *slavish Fear*, and only the

the product of trouble of Mind and terroure of Conscience ; rather than the genuin *proper issue* of a vehement hatred of Sin, for the Turpitude and Unreasonableness of it ; of a strong Affection to God and his Laws, and a hearty Love to Holiness ; when thou hast *no time* to make *sufficient Proof* and *due Trial* of the Truth and Sincerity of thy Faith and Repentance. And what comfortable joyfull security canst thou have, that God will *certainly* and *infallibly* save thee, by an act of *extraordinary Grace* and favour, in the want of the actions of a virtuous and holy life, which he requires in the Gospel as ordinarily necessary to Salvation ? It is here but a *may be*, a peradventure : It is *lawful* indeed, for God to do what he will with his own, Mat. 20. 15 ; but the possibility of an *extraordinary Grace* is not likely then to bring thee that *clear* and full light of sweet peace, and solid spiritual comfort, which an *early diligent* Improvement of the Grace of God *ordinarily* vouchsafed in the course of thy life, and time of thy health and strength, would in *all probability* have produced. If therefore thou wouldst wisely provide for thy peace, take no encouragement to delay the *Redemption of thy Time*, from the instance and example of the *Thief* upon the *Cross*, who was sincerely converted to *Christ*, and fully ascertain'd of Salvation by the infallible Oracle of the mouth of his Saviour, in the very close of his life, the final and ultimate hour before his departure.

*Obj.* But some or other may be ready and apt to say, Alas ! I have deser'd so long already, that though I entertain some serious Thoughts of redeeming the Time, and use my honest endeavours ; yet I fear, do what I can, it is now too late for me to obtain *Eternal Salvation*.

*Ans.* I answer : Hast thou made very long delays, spent and wasted a very considerable part of thy life, the most of thy precious time in the service of Sin  
and

and Satan. Why truly thou hast reason to be so much the more *humbled*, the more sorry for it, the more ashamed of it; the more *penitent* at present, and the more *obedient* for the future; great cause to purpose and intend to give unto God the whole remainder of thy time; and though thou hast but a small time, but a few years more to live here in this World, yet let this be the frame and temper, the *settled disposition*, and *invincible Resolution* of thy Soul, that if God should prolong thy life beyond thy expectation, that if thou hadst *never so much time* to spend upon this earth, thou wouldst, *by the help of God*, compose and set thy self to the study of *knowing*, and an endeavour of doing the Divine Will, to a *Renunciation* of thy past life and actions, and a conformation of thy affections and manners, to the rule and prescript of the Gospel of *Christ*; that thou wouldst employ thy *whole time*, expend and lay out *all thy strength* in the Service, and to the Glory of God only.

And here consider for thy comfort that there are to be found several sorts and degrees of late Penitents; and there is so much the more hope for thee, that thou art not of the lowest rank and form of all. Indeed, if thou wert a Death-bed penitent, tho I will not say thy case would be absolutely hopeless, utterly helpless, and altogether desperate, yet because it is so seldom and rare a thing, that so late repentance proves *sound and serious*, thy condition would be *exceeding dubious*, and *very dangerous*, and thy spiritual comfort extremely uncertain, if not ordinarily impossible; and supposing thou wert to begin thy repentance upon a Death-bed, I should not much wonder if thou shouldst almost begin thy Hell there.

But (as *St. Austin* discourses wisely and judiciously) if now thou forsake thy Sins and turnest to God, while thou doest enjoy *some measure of Health and Strength*; and *chooseth* to serve God, when yet thou couldst  
serve

serve Sin and Satan if thou *wouldst*; here is some *room* and *place* for strong comfort, such as may quiet the troubled Mind, and satisfy the afflicted conscience of a Sinner. Tho' thou beest but a *late Penitent*, yet if thou couldst be an *older Sinner*, and *wilt not*; if thou art willing to break off from Sin, when thou hast yet some time to sin, and strength to sin, and *occasions* of sin offer'd thee. and *Temptations* to Sin lying before thee, and pressing upon thee: When thou art *invited*, and it may be *provoked* to it, and thy *Faculties* are not yet so weaken'd and disabled, but that thou mightest several ways with *pleasure* sin if thou *wouldst*; if now thou *refusest*, and *wilt not*, it is a sign thy *Repentance*, tho' *late Repentance*, yet, is *true Repentance* for all that. Thou, who couldst go over thy *old Sins* again, if thou dost heartily cast them off, when thou couldst commit them afresh; If thou deliberately leavest thy Sins before thy Sins leave thee: If thou stedfastly resolvest, and earnestly endeavourest to work the work of God now, when there is some *Opportunity remaining* and *power left*, which if thou *wouldst* thou *couldst* employ in the Devils Work; if indeed this be thy case, if truly it be thus with thee, then be of good Comfort, for I dare assure thee, that God in Christ will graciously accept thee, and gloriously reward thee.

Remember and consider that they that were hired about the *eleventh hour* received every man a Penny, and were made equal unto those which had born the burden and heat of the day, Mat 20. 9. 12. This indeed gives no *Encouragement* to any that study to delay from day to day, because these persons in the parable were never call'd before the 11th. Hour; they stood no longer idle but went into the Vineyard, as soon as they were call'd, without any the least delay. Nor does it afford sufficient comfort to a death-bed penitent, because these persons that went in late, labour'd soundly, and wrought full

full hard for the *space of an hour*, before they receiv'd their pay, vvhich *Death-bed Penitents* have not time to do. But yet this passage gives good ground of great comfort to all such persons as *timely* think upon their vvays, turn their feet unto Gods testimonies, and enter into the race of Godliness, vvhen they could stand idle a vvhile longer, or still continue and run on further in foolish Ways, and sinful Courses.

To conclude all ; I exhort and beseech you, and let me effectually perswade and prevail with you by all that with any reason has been offer'd to your consideration, to break off all your *Delais, Excuses, Discouragements*; and to give all *speedy, careful, chearful diligence* to redeem the Time, to work out your Salvation, and to make your calling and election sure, by bringing forth the *reasonable, proper, plentiful Fruits* of an undelayed Repentance. Take the excellent counsel of the wise Son of Sirach; Ecclus. 18. 19, 20, 21, 22. *Use Physick, or ever thou be sick. Before Judgment examine thy self, and in the day of Visitation thou shalt find Mercy. Humble thy self before thou be sick, and in the time of Sins shew Repentance. Let nothing hinder thee to pay thy Vow in due time, and defer not until death to be justified. Follow likewise the advice, and practise according to the profitable direction of the learned Gerhard, timely and faithfully, use the means of Conversion and Salvation, live in the true fear of God, pray without ceasing, resist the beginnings of any sins, lest an evil thought raise delight, delight draw on consent, consent produce an evil work, evil works beget an evil habit, an evil habit induce a kind of necessity of sinning, and such necessity breed pertinacy, pertinacy cause despair, and desperation end in Damnation.*

F I N I S.

## ERRATA in the Epistle.

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